COMIC BOOK PROFILES™

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The magazine about comic book professionals

GENE COLAN

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GENE COLAN

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

Dan Brereton
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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Hi everyone! In this issue, we've expanded our format to fifty-six pages to accommodate more art and more interviews. Please let us know how you like the new format. We're considering going to a full color cover, and would like to know what you think. So please drop us a line and let us know whether you're for it, against it, or it doesn't matter to you.

Also in this issue, we did something that we don't normally do, in fact we've never done it before, and that is accept an interview conducted by someone other than Matt or myself, in this case, Kevin Hall. Kevin approached us with his interview of Gene just when we were gearing up for this issue, and as he asked many questions similar to what we would ask. So, we have incorporated his interview into the one we conducted with Gene. I'd like to thank Kevin for his invaluable assistance with this issue.

One question that I'm asked is if our interviews are all new. Of course! All our interviews are conducted in a span of a few months before publication. We never recycle interviews, or parts of interviews. What fun would that be?

Please note that on our subscription page, we've also added a questionnaire about who you'd like to see profiled in a future issue. Please take the time to fill it out. We put the requests in order of frequency, and that's who we contact first for upcoming issues. So please continue providing us with input, we do listen, and we want your suggestions.

We're still working on our tribute issue to Archie Goodwin, which is currently slated for publication in July. Again, anyone who worked with Archie and would like to participate please contact us.

Thanks to all those who contributed art from their personal collections for this issue: Terry Austin, Chris Bailey, Glen Gold, Wayne Osborne, Tom Palmer, Enrico Salvini, and Joel Thingvall. Thanks to Fred Hembeck who supplied us with many comic books from his personal collection that were needed while preparing this issue and to John Pratt of That's Entertainment that assisted in getting us the Dickie Dare strip. Special thanks to all those who took the time to be interviewed: Dan Brereton, Peter David, Mark Evanier, Steve Gerber, Phil Hester, Kelley Jones, Stan Lee, Don McGregor, Clifford Meth, Tom Palmer, and Marv Wolfman. Extra special thanks go to Gene and Adrienne Colan for their invaluable assistance with this issue.

We have a website! It was designed and is maintained by Ted Latner. You can visit us on-line at:
www.comicsfun.com/cbprofiles Thanks for all of your help Ted.

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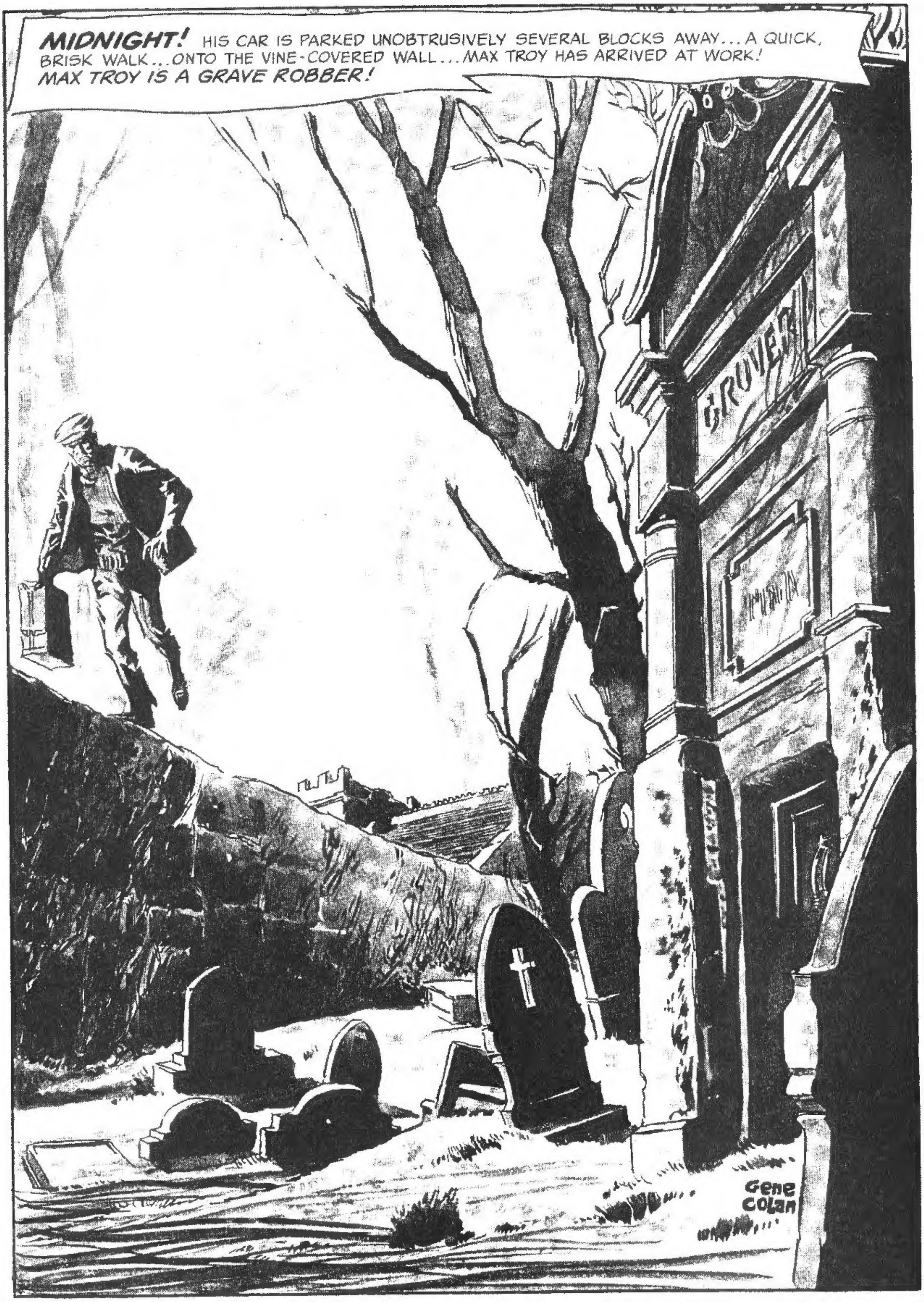

MIDNIGHT! HIS CAR IS PARKED UNOBTRUSIVELY SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY... A QUICK, BRISK WALK... ONTO THE VINE-COVERED WALL... MAX TROY HAS ARRIVED AT WORK! MAX TROY IS A GRAVE ROBBER!
GROVE
Gene Colan

50 From "Fitting Punishment," Creepy #8 ©& TM 1999 Warren Publishing Co. All rights reserved.

PROFILE

GENE COLAN

When you were growing up were there any comics you particularly enjoyed?
Yes, Dickie Dare. It was a comic strip that appeared in a newspaper that was publishing in New York at the time called the *Sun*; this was in the 1930's. I loved the work. Of course, there were a lot of heavy blacks in it. I think Milton Caniff used to do it, and then it was passed on to an artist by the name of Coulton Waugh. He also signed his name in a box like Milton Caniff. So I followed this strip. It became an obsession with me as to what would happen to Dickie Dare next. I would always wait for my dad to come up out of the subway so I could grab the paper out of his hand and see "did he make it," or "didn't he make it."

What kind of strip was it?
He was just a kid with his little dog. He was being menaced in a sailboat out at sea. I remember that part of it. I followed it religiously. I loved the drawings, and I just enjoyed reading it.

What other strips did you enjoy?
There was *Wash Tubbs* which became *Captain Easy* [the classic adventure strip by Roy Crane]. I read those, and *Don Winslow of the Navy*. A lot of stuff like that. There was also an artist, Noel Sickles, I liked. During World War II, he did a lot of artwork for *Life* magazine in the sort of style that Milton Caniff had created, but he went even beyond that. I admired his work tremendously. Most of it was always in black and white, in fact, I guess all of it was, because *Life* magazine printed just about everything in black and white in those years. I just enjoyed the action and the shadow effects that Noel Sickles would do. There was Lee Elias who imitated, at least I thought he imitated, Caniff's style to a tee. I remember all these people, but I think Milton Caniff with *Terry and the Pirates* got me going.

TIMELINE

Gene Colan

1926 Gene Colan is born in the Bronx, NY on September 1st.

1944 Gene begins working at Fiction House during the summer.

1945 He joins the Air Force and spends the next couple of years in the Philippines. While there he works on the *Manila Times.*

1949 Gene first work for Marvel, a story in *Two-Gun Kid* is published.

1950 *Captain America* #75, featuring a cover pencilled and inked by Gene is published in February.

1954 Gene first pencils *Hopalong Cassidy.*

1963 Gene and Adrienne are married.

1966 Issue #20 of *Daredevil* is published. This is Gene's first issue on the series and he will pencil all but a handful of the books until issue # 100.

mid 1960's Gene's work starts appearing in various Warren magazines including *Eerie, Creepy,* and *Blazing Combat.*

1972 *Tomb of Dracula* #1 is published. This begins a seven year run on this title for both Gene and writer Marv Wolfman.

1980's Gene starts working on a variety of books for DC including *Detective Comics, Wonder Woman, Jemm,* and *Nathaniel Dusk.*

1982 Marv Wolfman and Gene are reunited on *Night Force* published by DC.

1985 *Ragamuffins* is published by Eclipse Comics. This book is the first to be produced directly from Gene's pencils.

1991 He pencils the *Tomb of Dracula* mini-series for Marvel.

1998 *Curse of Dracula* is published by Dark Horse Comics. Towards the end of the year, Gene starts offering correspondence courses.

YOU LOOK SHARP NOW, BOY! YOU SEE MARIA ALL RIGHT...
GOSH, MR. OLIVAREZ...
Coulton Waugh
...I DON'T PICK UP ANYTHING!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE A LOOK...
GAPE AT A GAP
THIS...CAN'T BE, AND IT IS...
THE MARIA... SHE NOT THERE
4/18

Dickie Dare by Coulton Waugh

Did your parents encourage you in you artwork?
My parents and my grandparents did. All grandparents think the world of their grandchildren. They always boosted my ego a lot. My aunt especially, was very supportive of me, and my Dad, and my Mom, each in their own way.

I've read that your grandfather reminded you of Abraham Lincoln?
To me he was like Abraham Lincoln, but not in his physical appearance. He gave me a lot of things to go by in life. He told be to be honest and truthful, be a principled individual, be someone that people can trust . . . all the good stuff that a youngster would need to know about to shape his character. He was a very strong, principled man. If I ever asked him to loan me some money when I was a teenager, he would do it, but he would shake his finger at me and say, "Remember, you owe me money. You have to pay it back." He wanted me to be very honest and principled about whatever I did.

Growing up you were also a fan of the movies. Gary Cooper was your idol?
Yes. One time my parents took me to California, and while we were there we visited his house. I walked around his driveway which was all lined with flowers. It was quite something but he wasn't there. I wish I had had the chance to meet him. He was a cartoonist, too. He started out doing that but couldn't make a living doing it.

When you were around fourteen years old you went to what is now the DC offices to try to get work. What was that experience like?
I went up there and they brought out Jack Kirby's work and showed it to me and I just couldn't believe it. I knew right then and there that there was an awful lot I didn't know. The samples that I had worked up were with a nickel pen — you would just go to the stationary store in those years and get yourself a tablet and a pen. I didn't even know the artwork was drawn so large. So I was drawing it about the size of a comic book, with little panels, thinking that was the way it was done. Much to my surprise it was totally different. The inks that I saw and the pencils that I saw were clearly done by accomplished artists. They knew anatomy, and I didn't. So I knew I had my work cut out for me.

Do you remember meeting anyone at the DC offices?
I can't recall who the art director was at the time, but he took me into the bullpen and I met Bob Kane there. I didn't meet Kirby; he must've been on a freelance basis, but I saw a lot of his work. I saw Bob Kane's work too. If you have a good memory about those things as an artist you pick up details and I remember Kane had already finished a panel with a hand holding a gun; you could see every sinew, every muscle, every finger on the hand that was holding the gun, even the gun looked so real. It was nothing the way I imagined comics to be. And I was told that I had the ability but I was far from ready, and that I had to go to school. So I did. I went to the Art Student's League just before entering the service.

You mentioned not meeting Jack Kirby then. Do you remember when you first met him?
I was in awe. I must have been in my late teens.

GENE COLAN

Was it difficult to get into the Art Student's League?
No, it really wasn't. I think I had to show them something, but I got in and it didn't seem all that difficult.

What was the most important thing you learned at the Art Student's League?
Anatomy. Frank Riley, the famous illustrator, would be on hand to look over the artwork to tell you where you'd gone right or wrong. He would show up about once a week and you had to make sure you were there that day. I went every day for about a year. He would go over every student's work rather quickly. He would also bring in his original paintings and show us — it was certainly an eye-opener. I remember when I joined the Art Student's League, I was told to go down the hall to the live class where there would be a model. I went down the hall and I saw a naked woman sitting in the model room, and I really thought I had gone to a place I shouldn't be. I darted out of there so fast! I didn't know what to do. I eventually wound up in a class where you would work from plaster of Paris — molds of heads, figure work — and graduated into the model class where there would be a live model all the time, and you would learn anatomy from that. It was just a matter of practicing over and over again. You may not know the names of the muscles, but you'd learn how to draw them.

Before entering the Air Force you worked for a while at Fiction House?
Yes. That was a summer job. I met Murphy Anderson there. At the time the two of us were just kids trying to get started. I worked there for just that summer. Right after that I went into the service. I tried to keep in touch with the publisher there but he never answered my letters. It was just a one time experience. When I got out of the service I really had to buckle down to nailing a job somewhere.

You actually entered the service twice?
Well, I enlisted. I tried to enter the Marine Corps but my father came and pulled me out because I was underage. A short time after that I joined the Air Force.

Describe your experience in the Air Force.
I spent a couple of years in the Philippines after World War II was over. The bomb had just been dropped on Hiroshima. While I was in the Air Force I was supposed to be a prison guard but I managed to have my assignment changed because I was drawing all the time. I got to know some of the officers there. Very gradually they came to know what I could do. So, I worked for the officer's club and did murals. I met a lot of people there. Once I saw Red Skelton. He came on the field prior to getting into film and he was entertaining the troops. I also managed to do some work for the *Manila Times*, drawing all my experiences in the service.

What type of things did you draw for the Manila Times?
I kept a diary in picture form of fellows that I knew and what camp life was like. I could really lose myself with that part of it, I really enjoyed it. One rainy day I went and sat in a fighter aircraft. I got into the cockpit and I sat down. I looked up and the instruments were way above my head. I was sitting in there with the intention of drawing the instrument panel, but it was so high up, and I couldn't understand why. But anyway, from that point of view I did try to get a pilot's perspective of what the instrument panel looked like. I spent the whole day in there, I remember it was pouring rain over the plexiglass top. Later I had this fellow tell me the reason that I was so low was because I didn't have a parachute on, and the pilots sat on their parachutes. It was like sitting in a hole, and your parachute was your seat, and that raised you up to the level of the instruments.

After you come home from the service you begin to look for work.
Yes. I went back to DC and I still couldn't get in. To me they were like trying to get into MGM. So I figured, what the heck, I'll try at Marvel. And that was my introduction to Marvel. I met Stan Lee there — he was hardly any older than I was.

He gave you work immediately.
Yes, it was immediate. The art director came out and looked at my work. I had really worked on something hard, and I was convinced that with this kind of an effort I would surely get a position. He said to me, "Wait a minute." I knew that there was something up. He took my work and went to the back room where

Stan must have been. I was waiting outside for about five or ten minutes, which to me was a good sign and he came out and asked me to come with him. So I went into the back room where Stan was, and Stan was playing cards with someone — it was during the lunch break. Stan said to me, "So you want to be an artist, huh? You want to join up with us?" I said, "You bet." And he said, "Well, you got a job." I couldn't believe it.

What type of stories were you working on?
They gave me everything to do: gangster stories, westerns, war stories, romance stories, just about everything. I really learned a lot. There was an artist who helped me tremendously, his name was Syd Shores. He sort of ran the bullpen. John Buscema was there and he reminded me of Robert Mitchum. In those years he had jet black hair and a kind of swagger and he kind of had that sleepy-eyed look that Mitchum has. Anyway, there must have been fifteen or twenty people in the bullpen and it was just like a family. We had such a good time. We really should have been working harder instead of laughing and having a good time, but we had a great time from Monday to Friday.

So you worked consistently for Marvel for about ten years?
Yes, and then one day I came in and everybody was out of a job. It happened over the weekend and we came in on a Monday to start our week as usual, and there was no work. Marvel had decided that it would be better for them to farm out the work. I had prepared for it in advance. For some reason I was told that there was plenty of freelance work out there, so I took a day off and tried to get some of it and I did. So when I came in on Monday I happened to be prepared for the lay-offs, fortunately for me. I had already picked up some accounts and I worked from home.

That freelance work, was it all in the comics industry, or outside?
It was all comics. At that time there were publishers on every street corner.

Up to that point, you worked pretty much exclusively for Marvel/Timely?
Oh yes. But I worked for Quality Comics and St. John's Publications too. I even managed to get work eventually from DC.

Did you have some sense of satisfaction when you finally got work from DC?
Oh yeah. I felt like I had kind of made it, by the mere fact that I was able to get the work. That indicated to me that I must have improved a lot. But it was a very difficult road. There was so much for me to learn that I didn't know. Eventually you pick up this know-how, and you're not even aware of it but you pick up a style too.

When you were first getting started in the industry, do you remember if there was anyone who impressed you?
Oh, yes. Reed Crandall. He did Blackhawk at the time. This was in the very early 1950's, and I had the privilege of seeing originals of his stuff laying about on the editor's desk. He worked for Quality Comics in Manhattan. I never, unfortunately, had the opportunity to meet him. But I saw his work, and I would just pore over the stuff. I was delivering work myself. I was working for them doing a strip called "Shannon." It was a detective story, and I don't remember the first name of the character, but I really picked up on [Reed Crandall's] work. I saw the illustrator in him, and I wanted my work to look like his. So, you know, artists pick up from one another. So do musicians, composers — we steal from one another.

Was there at some point in the late fifties, early sixties that you left the comic book industry?
I think they left me. The bottom dropped out because of distribution problems and also the comics got a bad rap. In those years, around 1956, things began to fall off, and it got to the point where I didn't know where to go or what to do. Then it got to the point where I couldn't pick up any work from anyone, especially Marvel. They were terribly affected by it. Stan was literally running that place by himself with Jack Kirby. Jack Kirby was the only employed artist. I couldn't get anything, no one else could get anything, that I know of. So I had to leave the field and pick up whatever I could get.

You were doing various art jobs then?
Mostly advertising stuff which I really hated. You're

THE ARMY IN VIET-NAM! IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, THE DRIVES CONTINUE... MEN AND MACHINES PRESSING FORWARD... PRESSING THE VIET-CONG! AN INFANTRY SQUAD MOVES UP THROUGH A RICE PADDY... TWO MEN PAUSE BEFORE THE WORK OF AN AERIAL ATTACK... PAUSE BEFORE AN ENEMY SOLDIER CUT DOWN IN THE...

CONFLICT!

ART BY EUGENE COLAN/SCRIPT BY ARCHIE GOODWIN

From "Conflict," Blazing Combat #4 ©& TM 1999 Warren Publishing Co. All rights reserved.

not dealing with stories, you're dealing with *a* picture.

It was in the early sixties that you got back into comics, around 1963?
Very gradually. I was working for a company in Manhattan that did educational filmstrips. I did those for several years, and that's when I met my wife Adrienne. It was through her persistence that I left. I really hated it. They didn't appreciate the work that I did. I wasn't happy there. You have to be happy at what you're doing, otherwise you're going to be a failure at it, and you're going to resent the position. I listened to her, and I left. She literally had to yank me out of there.

So then I made the rounds over at Dell Publishing. They turned out western magazines and comic books. I did a series for them, *Burke's Law*, based on the television series that was going pretty strong at the time. I also did a comic about Vince Edwards' TV series *Ben Casey* for them. That eventually became a syndicated strip, which I did not do.

> *"You have to be happy at what you're doing, otherwise you're going to be a failure at it."*

Soon you're working for both Marvel and DC and using the pseudonym of Adam Austin?
I was working for DC then, and I wanted to work for Stan as well. Stan wanted me to come aboard again. I didn't trust my position at Marvel, and I decided I would continue to work for DC while picking up work from Marvel. Stan wanted me to come on board exclusively for Marvel, and I didn't feel like doing it at the time, and I didn't want DC to know that I was working for Marvel, so I changed my name to Adam Austin. But it never worked because artwork is like handwriting; people know who you are anyway.

Eventually you went to Marvel full time.
Yes. Stan really wanted me to come over and I eventually did. Of course, he sweetened the pot for me a little bit as an inducement. He didn't want to do it, but he did. Unless he made it worth my while I wouldn't come over.

You've talked pretty fondly about working with Stan at Marvel.
Stan Lee reminds me a lot of Jack Lemmon. He always did. I would even tell him that. I don't know whether he was insulted or liked it *(laughs)*, but I did tell him that. You know, Stan couldn't draw a line, but he knew *a lot* about art. He influenced me a lot. When we were doing *Daredevil* he said, "Make the characters vulnerable, occasionally give them a cold. Make them like real people so that the readers can relate to them better." I had never thought of that. I just kept on drawing them the way I always did, and I figured this was a new twist. Occasionally I'd put in the bad weather which you'd never see in the comic unless it was pertinent to the story. So, I would do those things. But Stan really got me on that track. He also once told me how to draw a pretty girl. It was very simple. I would struggle over it for years, and then one day he said, "This is how you do it, it's so easy." He told me, "Draw the eyes a little closer together in a teardrop shape, shorten the nose a bit, and don't draw the lips too far from the nose." And it works.

Stan was great. He allowed the artist a lot of freedom. He would tell them right from the start what he was looking for. It wasn't beyond him to stand up on his desk and actually illustrate by moving about like a superhero would, right on the top of his desk. He'd climb right up there and say, "This is how I'd want the character to stand when he's about to leap from one building to another." It psyches the reader.

Stan allowed you a lot of freedom but it sounds like he had specific things he wanted to see in the art.
Oh, yes. He did. He once gave me a Captain America story where he had written an automobile chase in it, and I portrayed practically the whole book with this car chase. I took liberties with it, and he really raked me over the coals for it. He said, "My God, you could have shown at the most four panels of a car chase. What did you do? You ate up half the plot just

YOU RED-SUITED FOOL! DON'T YOU REALIZE YET THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH THE IMPOSSIBLE?
THE STEEL SPRINGS COILED AT MY FEET MAKE ME A DOZEN TIMES FASTER--MORE AGILE THAN YOU CAN EVER HOPE TO BE!
AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T YET SEEN ME EXERCISE MY GREATEST TALENT--!
YOU MEAN THERE'S MORE?
I CAN HARDLY WAIT!
HE'S SO CONFIDENT THAT HE HASN'T EVEN TRIED TO STRIKE BACK AT ME! HE DOESN'T EVEN SEEM TO CONSIDER ME A THREAT TO HIM!
I WONDER WHAT NEW LITTLE GOODIES HE HAS UP HIS SLEEVE?
BLAM!

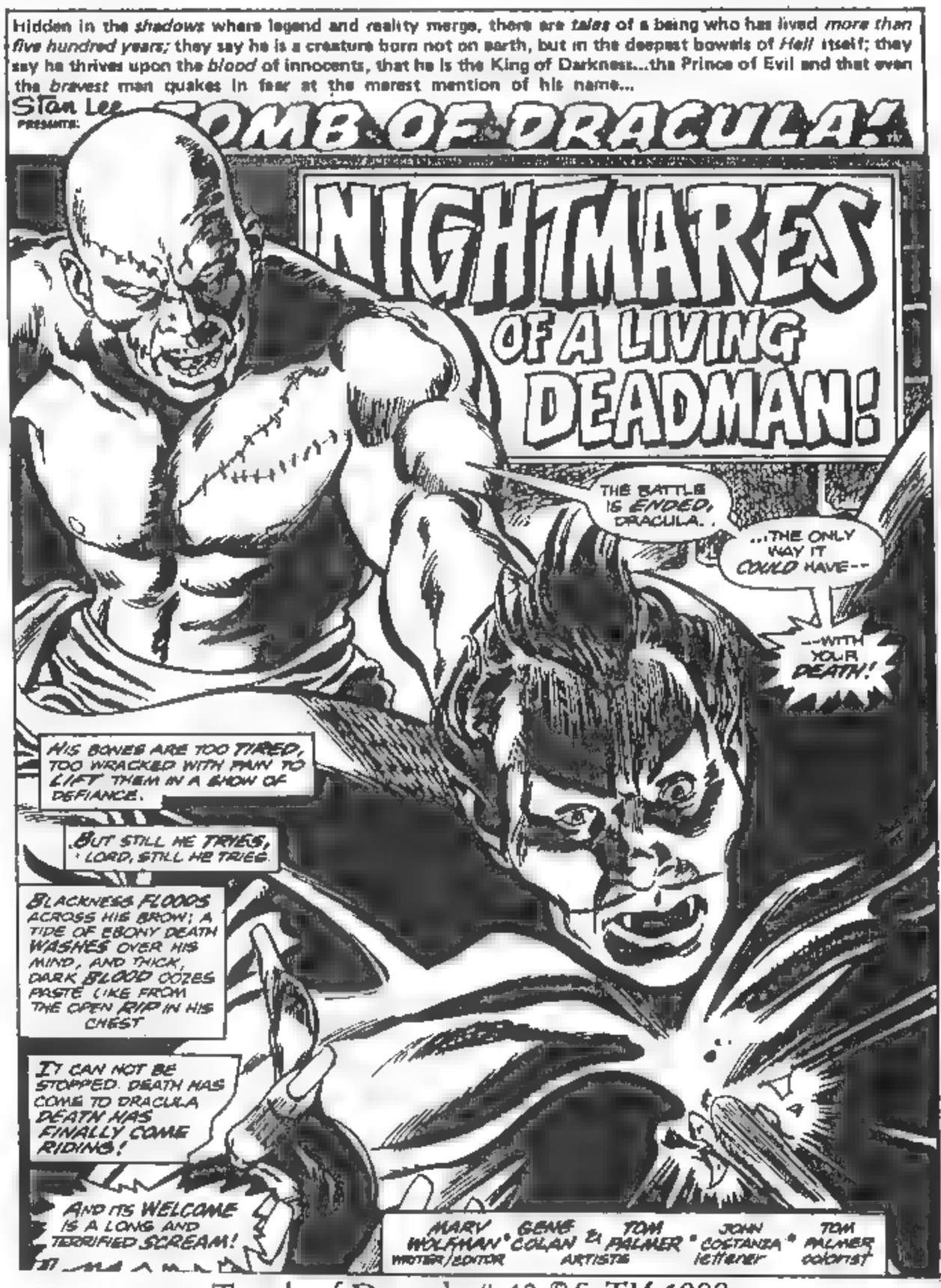
From Daredevil #25 Frank Giacoia inks. Daredevil ©& *TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

showing that." I was very influenced by the film *Bullitt*, and I wanted to have a go at it myself. So, I had fun with it, and in fact in the letters to the editor — the fans loved it. So, I had a good time and maybe that's the only time I think I ever proved Stan to be wrong. *(laughs)*

One series that you are well known for during this time is Daredevil. You helped to define the character.
I had an opportunity [to define Daredevil] because I stayed with it.

What guest stars, villains, or supporting cast in Daredevil did you enjoy drawing the most?
I've always enjoyed Foggy [Nelson] . . . doing Foggy is a comedy relief thing, and I was always looking for that. So, I enjoyed that aspect of it. Matt Murdock would get a little cocky at times and that would inject some humor into the book. I think that was my favorite strip really. I never enjoyed the *Sub-Mariner*, because that represented strange cities, science fiction type backgrounds, and I'm not good at that.

Hard to relate to?
Yeah, I just couldn't. He was a difficult character to draw to begin with. He had a flat head, and at the same time I had to make him look good-looking. Once I had to deal with that flat head, I couldn't do it.


Hidden in the shadows where legend and reality merge, there are tales of a being who has lived more than five hundred years; they say he is a creature born not on earth, but in the deepest bowels of Hell itself; they say he thrives upon the blood of innocents, that he is the King of Darkness...the Prince of Evil and that even the bravest man quakes in fear at the merest mention of his name...
Stan Lee PRESENTS:
TOMB OF DRACULA!
NIGHTMARES OF A LIVING DEADMAN!
THE BATTLE IS ENDED, DRACULA..
...THE ONLY WAY IT COULD HAVE--
--WITH YOUR DEATH!
HIS BONES ARE TOO TIRED, TOO WRACKED WITH PAIN TO LIFT THEM IN A SHOW OF DEFIANCE.
BUT STILL HE TRIES, LORD, STILL HE TRIES.
BLACKNESS FLOODS ACROSS HIS BROW; A TIDE OF EBONY DEATH WASHES OVER HIS MIND, AND THICK, DARK BLOOD OOZES PASTE LIKE FROM THE OPEN RIP IN HIS CHEST
IT CAN NOT BE STOPPED. DEATH HAS COME TO DRACULA DEATH HAS FINALLY COME RIDING!
AND ITS WELCOME IS A LONG AND TERRIFIED SCREAM!
MARV WOLFMAN WRITER/EDITOR
GENE COLAN ARTISTS
TOM PALMER
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
TOM PALMER colorist
Tomb of Dracula # 40 ©& TM 1999
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Another series that you are well known for at Marvel is Tomb of Dracula. How did your assignment on Dracula come about?
I had to fight for that book. It was Bill Everett that was supposed to have the series. I took the day off and worked up some samples of how I thought Dracula should look, and I fashioned him after Jack Palance and sent it in. Stan gave me the position immediately. He called me up and said, "It's yours." From that point on Marv Wolfman and I worked on that for about eight or nine years.

Was it fun?
Oh yeah. I enjoyed it very much. After a while it got a little on the boring side. You keep doing the same thing over and over again and it's hard to come up fresh. So I had told Marv that I would like to quit the book a few times. Things had changed in the industry, new people had come aboard, and I don't know, I sort of just lost interest in it. Then Marv felt that he didn't want to do it either. If we couldn't keep it together, there would be no point in him staying in it as well.

I just wanted to move on. I didn't want to get into the niche that Bela Lugosi got into or Boris Karloff — that's all they ever did. I wanted to move on to other things, more present day things. Of course, I moved

on then to *Dr. Strange* which was a little better, a little more different. I loved doing that because that was during the psychedelic years, and everybody was into drugs and all kinds of wild stuff. So, I had an opportunity to create some wild backgrounds that went with the era. It was fun. I don't know why I discontinued doing it. I think *Howard the Duck* came along then, and somebody said I couldn't do both. So someone else had to pick up with *Dr. Strange*.

You said that you modeled the Dracula character after Jack Palance. Who do you model your supporting characters after? Friends, family?
Through the years I've collected different characters. I have files covering just about everything and anything. I even have folders on characters: old people, young people — and I draw upon that. Anyone with an interesting face that I can use, I'll use it and put it in the comics.

Jemm ©& TM 1999 DC Comics. All rights reserved.

So, you'll see a photograph somewhere . . .
Or, I'll take my own pictures very often. I did the Dracula story recently for Dark Horse. No one wanted to repeat Jack Palance's look. The idea was to come up with a different looking Dracula, a young version, an up-to-date one. I was wondering who in the world I could use. I couldn't think of anyone offhand that I might be able to use, and as luck would have it my lawn boy, a real good looking fellow, had just the right look for Dracula. That's who I used. Right in front of me, and it couldn't be plainer than day. So, I used him.

Toward the end of the seventies, you stopped working for Marvel and went back to DC.
Yes, I had a very hard time. Well you see, Stan left, and he was grooming Jim Shooter for his position. Stan had plans to go out to the coast, and I could see the handwriting on the wall. I came to the quick decision that Jim Shooter was not going to be someone that I could get along with. So I tried to stick it out as long as I could because there was a pension involved, but eventually I just simply folded up my tent and went over to DC.

And worked steadily there throughout the decade.
Oh about ten years, yeah. I worked on *Detective Comics, Nathaniel Dusk, Jemm, Son of Saturn, Wonder Woman*, and *Nightforce*.

Nathaniel Dusk is interesting because they reproduced your work directly from the pencils.
The last ten years or so my work has started to be reproduced in pencil. Because of the sophisticated printing processes that they now have, they were able to do it. In the earlier days they couldn't. The first

DD#88

--AND THAT'S *IT*, MATT.

...ONE THAT'LL TELL US *NOTHING* ABOUT DANNY FRENCH?

RIGHT. WHAT HAPPENED *AFTER* SHE LEFT RUSSIA--

WE DIDN'T MEET AGAIN FOR *THREE YEARS*... BUT THAT'S *ANOTHER* STORY.

--IS NONE OF YOUR *BUSINESS*, IVAN.

DANNY FRENCH IS *MY* CONCERN... NOT *YOURS!*

NATASHA!

KID, I WAS ONLY TRYING TO--

IT'S ALL RIGHT, IVAN-- I *UNDER-STAND.*

I APPRECIATE YOUR WORRY-- BUT IT'S JUST *MISPLACED.*

TASH, WILL YOU *LISTEN* TO ME--?

NOT *NOW*... NOT TILL THIS THING'S OVER... AND *FINISHED.*

AND MATT--THAT'S SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO DO ALONE!

PLEASE *BELIEVE* ME. *PLEASE*, MATT.

HONEY, YOU'RE GOING ABOUT THIS *MESS* ALL *WRONG.*

LET ME--

SORRY, MATT. MAYBE *LATER*--WE'LL *TALK!*

AND AS THE DOOR CLOSES ON THE WIDOW'S RETREATING FORM...

GOING *AFTER* HER, MATT?

MAYBE I SHOULD--?

STAY *HERE*, IVAN... AND WATCH THAT *HOMING DEVICE.*

IF EITHER OF US GETS INTO *TROUBLE...*

...WE'LL NEED *YOU* TO BAIL US *OUT!*

From Daredevil #88 Inks by Tom Palmer. Daredevil ©& *TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

time this was done was on *Ragamuffins*. Don McGregor was the writer, Eclipse was the publisher, and they reproduced everything from pencil. They were the first company to do it. Other companies that wanted to reproduce the pencilled work had to ask them how to do it.

By the end of the eighties, you were doing some work again for Marvel.
Yes. I came back and did other things for them. It was good. The relationship turned out well.

The Curse of Dracula came out in July from Dark Horse. This teamed you up again with Marv Wolfman. What was it like working together again after all these years?
It was fun. It was very nice to go back to it. Of course, we've all changed a little bit. Marv puts more into it than he did then. It's good. It's just a different Dracula all together, so it's not like doing what I had done in the 1970's. It's a different character all together.

What other projects have you worked on recently?
I did some trading cards. They're called Sketchgraphs and are made by Fleer. I had a thousand of those to do. They're just little sketches on the back of the cards of any of the superheroes that I've ever done. I could have just done one character, but I did every character I've ever done.

That must have taken quite a while.
Oh sure. I had to sign my name a thousand times too.

You're also doing commissions?
Yes. I've done some cover recreations and pin-ups.

You also did some artwork for a CD?
Yes, I did something for Rob Zombie. He wanted me to do a comic book story for him, which he had written, and I did. He called me up for it, and I was surprised to hear from him. I always play music when I work, and I happened to have one or two CD's of his, and then I hear from him, which was a big surprise. So I did this thing for him. It was just a one-time thing but it was interesting.

Speaking of non-comic book related projects, you also worked on a movie once, didn't you?
I did have a chance, along with Stan Lee, to do some drawing for a film called the *Ambulance*. Eric Roberts was in it as was James Earl Jones and Red Buttons. I had a chance to meet them and be with them. Eric Roberts played the role of a cartoonist, but he can't draw. So, they were going to have me do the drawing with a camera over my shoulders, pretending to be Eric Roberts doing it. But, you know, they come up with these plans of what they're going to do when they make a film and so much of the time they don't follow through with it. But I did meet these people and it was an enjoyable thing. I did do some artwork for them about this ambulance that is prominent in the plot — showing the ambulance. I had to sketch it out in three or four different stages: one is just a light sketch, and then one a little bit more finished, until it was totally finished. That way they could photograph Eric Roberts drawing it, but you'd be looking at the back of the pad, not at the pad, and then you'd see the first stage that he was at. The camera scene would switch to that. Actually, there were four drawings that I had to do to establish that, so that's what I was doing. It was just all by movie magic. The whole experience was wonderful. My wife was with me on the set. It was in the summer, it was hot as hell, and we were shooting down in the Soho district of Manhattan. It was great. I had the time of my life.

You've worked for a lot of different companies over the years, and not just different companies, but doing different styles of comics. Is it difficult to switch gears from something like Archie to Tomb of Dracula to something else? Or do you like being able to do that?
I've never had a problem with it for some reason. I've recognized that I've been able to do it. It's never been hard for me. I can shift gears. Actually, I could spend half the day on something highly illustrative and realistic and spend the rest of the day on doing a cartoon thing.

Do you have to put yourself in a certain mindset to do a "cartoon thing"?
Yeah, you have to. You have to visualize . . . you have to erase anything that's real looking and start to think of things in a funny way. What I think about is, "How would Disney handle it?" That helps me get a jump start. For detail and artistry, I look at Disney's older films, particularly *Pinocchio*. For action: *Bugs*

Curse of Dracula ©& TM 1999 Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan. All rights reserved.

Bunny, *Roadrunner*, and *Tom and Jerry*. I've been influenced by other cartoonists, the way they draw the feet and the hands, and I introduce that into my work. I enjoy it. It comes easy to me. Why? I don't know. In fact, when I was doing *Daredevil*, I tried to lighten things up a bit by drawing Daredevil in a sort of a comical way — something like Will Eisner would do. *The Spirit* is really a detective story, but he hams it up a lot, and it makes it even more interesting because of it. I enjoy that aspect of it. I like to do a little cartooning every chance I get. I don't get an opportunity to do it that much.

You've been in this business for a long time. They way you work, how has that changed over time?
Gradually I became a little more realistic, a little more photographic as the years went by. I tried to get as much realism in my work as I could.

What about technically? As far as the equipment you use? Or how you approach a page? Has that changed at all?
No. I still try to approach it in a cinematic way. That part of it has never changed. I've changed the shape of the panels, to put the reader a little off balance when it's called for. If there's a lot of action happening, then I could cut the panels into weird shapes to suit the action, and if there was nothing but conversation on the page then the panels were straight up and down.

Do you find anything particularly difficult artistically?
Every day I hope I can get through it and be happy with the work. I'm never sure of how it's going to come out. I always hope that it comes out good. I struggle at it. I'm not fast. There are some artists that are fast; John Buscema is very fast and he's very good. I've always admired his work, because I've watched him in action, I've seen him work. He can sit back, with a cigar in his hand, carry on a whole conversation, and before you know it a page is done. And it looks so damn good *(laughs)*. That's the thing. He's like Robert Mitchum to me, that laid-back demeanor and swagger. When the comics came to the house in the '60's and '70's, it was only John's work I'd run to see, just to torture myself. It was so good!

Do you like a writer who tries to give you as much as possible?
No, no. The less they give me, the better I like it, because that gives me a lot of freedom to do what I want. I'll embellish, I'll add things that he doesn't have in there to liven it up, things like that.

That's got to be different with different writers?
Well, it creates a creative problem. I can understand that, being an artist. I mean . . . writing is an art also, coloring is an art, lettering is an art, so when you infringe on someone else's territory and begin to tell them how you're going to do it and take away their rights of writing the printed word, naturally they're going to get their hackles up over it. If I'm going to do something different, I used to call them and speak to them on the phone . . . kind of like getting their permission to do it or talk them into it. I just don't bother any more, I just do it and let the chips fall where they may.

Do you have any favorite drawings or panels over the years that are special to you?
Oh, yes. When I was doing *Nathaniel Dusk* there was a scene in Grand Central Station where the detective is being hunted by a killer, and he has to leap off the platform onto the tracks as there's a big gun battle going on and the train bearing down on him. That's one of my favorites. I happen to have some of these hanging up in my house. Another is of a telephone conversation between Nathaniel Dusk and his girlfriend. Instead of using panels to show the conversation, I designed the page by open pictures of all close-ups on the telephone, but each one's different, and it follows a pattern. You could easily separate them without a box by going from the top of the page, a little bit to the right, then it zig zags all the way down to the left like the letter "Z", and then it finally winds up at the bottom of the page when the conversation's over. That was fun to do. Sometimes these inspirations come to me, and I'll play up on it, take advantage of it. It doesn't happen often, but once in a while I get these strange layouts. I noticed an awful lot of art today is "designing art." The artists are trying to design a page more than it used to be. And I think that's good.

Are comics an avocation for you or just work?
No, I don't spend time on comics as a hobby. When I'm through with my day's work, I'm through.

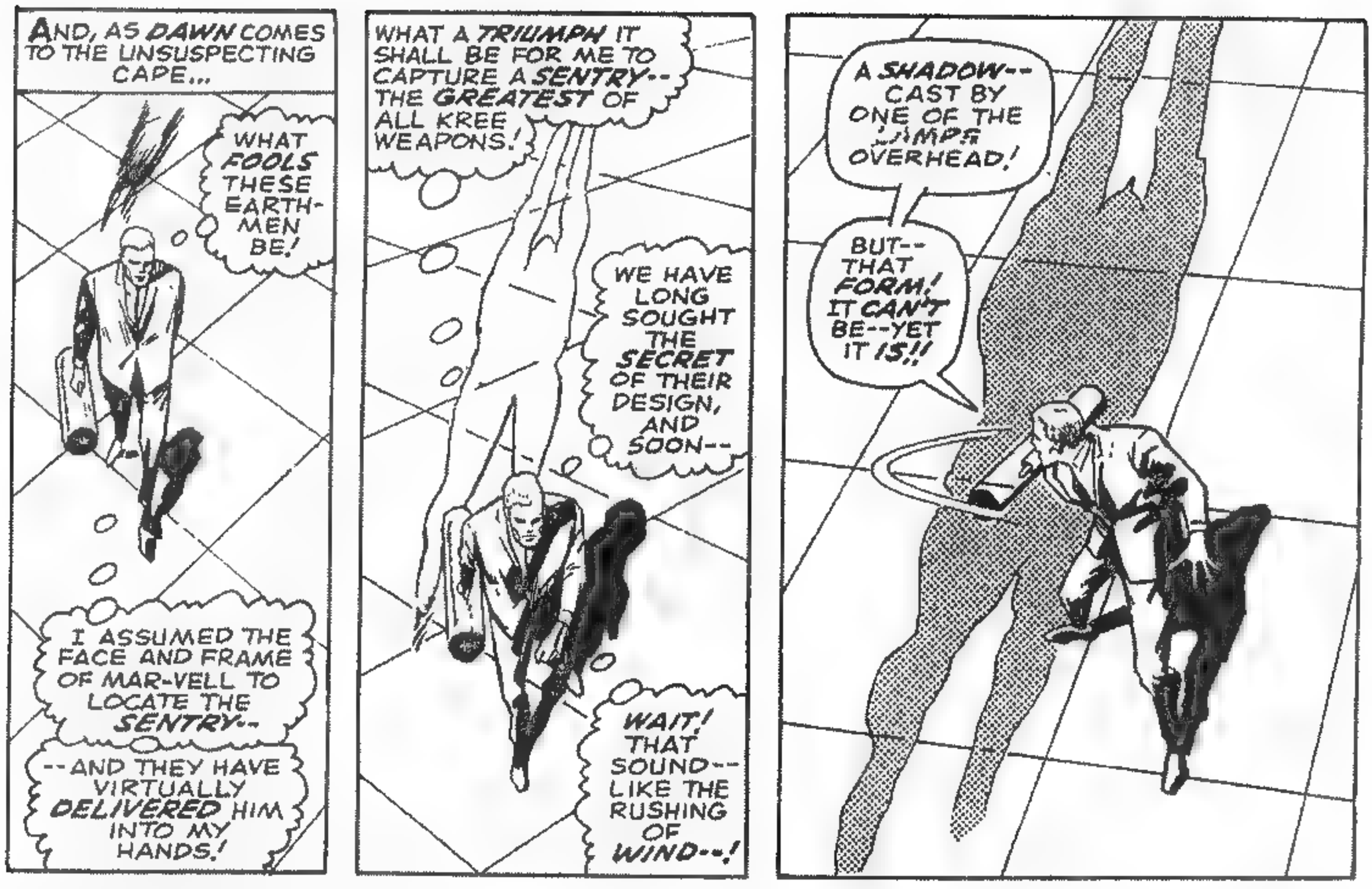
What other things do you enjoy?
I love film a lot. I used to collect movie film years ago. Things have changed. The technology is all different. So, there's no need for a projector anymore. If you have a good VCR and a big-sized screen, you're all set. An awful lot of stuff is on disk. I'd rather have it on disk than on tape. But, anyway, that's one way I keep myself busy. I also put in a SurroundSound system in the house. I never had one before. Oh, boy! What a sensational effect that is. You'd think you were in Carnegie Hall. Of course, the amplifier can do different things: it can create the effects of a large auditorium or a small supper club, and it's nice. It enhances everything.

You've had some vision problems.
Yes. Well for some reason it has not affected my ability to draw, because I have center vision. But my peripheral vision is not good, and the vision in my left eye is very bad. I've had glaucoma for years. It kept getting worse, and finally I had to go up to Boston and see some doctors who specialized in glaucoma. I had some operations up there, and they finally got a handle on it. The whole thing with glaucoma is the pressure builds until your eye cannot tolerate it, and blindness can set in. But they caught it in time, although not so much with my left eye. I can see out of my left eye but it's very blurry.

WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU SOUND OUT
YEH. I AM.
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE YOU CALLING AT THIS TIME OF THE DAY?
AMANDA. IT'S YOUR—
NO!
NO, DON'T TELL ME
DON'T SAY IT.
I...I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT
YEH I UNDERSTAND. I DIDN'T WANT TO BE THE ONE WHO HAD TO TELL YOU. BUT IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN RIGHT IF I DIDN'T.
WHEN?
JUST. JUST MINUTES AGO.
WHERE?
AT HIS APPLE STAND NEAR THE HUNGRY UNICORN
I'LL BE THERE IN TEN MINUTES!
AMANDA, I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND YOU COME DOWN HERE. THEY.. SHOT HIM... WITH A THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN...
HE'S MY FATHER! I'LL BE THERE!
CLICK!
CLIK
YOU MEAN.
WAS YOUR FATHER.
Nathaniel Dusk ©& TM 1999 DC Comics. All rights reserved.

It must have been scary for you.
Yes it was. I didn't know how it was going to affect my career.

How has your wife, Adrienne, been a part of your work? Does she help critique sometimes? Does she try any artwork herself?
No, but she's very artistically inclined. She loves theater, she loves film, and she critiques my work quite heavily. I don't always like what she says, because it either means that it's too late to redo, or I don't want to do it over *(laughs)*, but when she's right, and most of the time she is, I just go ahead and redo it. Not a whole story, because by then it's too late. But, panel to panel, if there's something in the panel that she thought that I could have portrayed better or put something else in it or take something out, I would do it. Not *like* it . . . but I would do it. *(laughs)* ❖


AND, AS DAWN COMES TO THE UNSUSPECTING CAPE...
WHAT FOOLS THESE EARTH-MEN BE!
I ASSUMED THE FACE AND FRAME OF MAR-VELL TO LOCATE THE SENTRY--
--AND THEY HAVE VIRTUALLY DELIVERED HIM INTO MY HANDS!
WHAT A TRIUMPH IT SHALL BE FOR ME TO CAPTURE A SENTRY-- THE GREATEST OF ALL KREE WEAPONS!
WE HAVE LONG SOUGHT THE SECRET OF THEIR DESIGN, AND SOON--
WAIT! THAT SOUND-- LIKE THE RUSHING OF WIND--!
A SHADOW-- CAST BY ONE OF THE JUMPS OVERHEAD!
BUT-- THAT FORM! IT CAN'T BE--YET IT IS!!

MAR-VELL!
DID YOU TRULY THINK TO DEFEAT ME SO EASILY, SUPER SKRULL?
YET, YOU MUST HAVE THOUGHT ME A LIFELESS CORPSE, FLOATING IN SPACE--
--OR YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN THE ONE SHAPE THAT I COULD FIND MOST QUICKLY!
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From Captain Marvel #3 Vince Colletta inks. Captain Marvel ©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

adrienne COLAN

You met Gene in 1963?
Yes, we met at a resort in Pennsylvania.

You were influential in getting Gene back into comic books.
When I first met Gene, it was a total dry spell for getting work in comics, at least for him. He was working at a small art studio doing filmstrip art for educational purposes. Basically he was drawing stick figures. After showing me his paintings and other original artwork done for his own pleasure, I was horrified at what he was doing for a living. Plus, he was yawning all over the place at work because they never let him embellish any of the artwork he was doing; it was so cut and dry. I told him to quit. He listened. He got back into comics one job at a time and within a year his career was in full bloom. It was a very exciting time for both of us. He's my hero.

It was commendable of you to advise Gene not to stay at a job that he wasn't happy at. Not everyone would do that.
I'm not so sure about that. I think most women would have done that for the man they love. Gene thinks it was something special but I think that most women are special, and that most women would have done that.

What do you think about Gene's career? A comic artist isn't exactly your typical 9 to 5 job.
We've been married thirty-five years, and the worst part of it for me has been the hideous amount of hours Gene has spent at his drawing board. It's taken a pretty bad toll on me and our family life, and we've both missed out on a lot of things in life because of his devotion to his work and quest for excellence. But he wanted to create powerful moving images, and he wanted those reading comics to sit up and take notice, and that they did. It's been tremendously rewarding to witness the pleasure and praise his fans have shared with him all these years. He had hoped, but never imagined he'd become known the way he has. He told me just the other day sort of wistfully, "I think I dazzled a few." I thought, boy, did he say a mouthful! He made his life into something extraordinary through his art, and I've been so proud to be along his side, truly.

> *"He made his life into something extraordinary through his art."*

The comic industry has definitely had its ups and downs over the decades; how have you and Gene made it through the rough times?
How did we get through the rough times? Who says we're through them? *(laughs)* Seriously though, Gene and I have turned to God for everything. Life is sometimes scary, and sometimes mean, and sometimes heartbreaking. So we pray and hold one another, then we cry and then giggle, then we fight and catastrophize many situations and then calm down and return to prayer. We go from there to pick up the pieces of this life's inconsistencies and challenges. The life of a freelance artist, at least for Gene, has been extremely rocky. At the foundation of how we get on with his career when he's dealt a blow is I remind him of his talent and that there will always be a market for excellence. That gets him cooking again and we both get busy poking around, looking for work.

How would you sum up the last thirty-five years?
Wow, that's a difficult question. It's so hard to separate out

what's happened to us, as opposed to what's happened to Gene in the industry. There have been times where . . . he went through the stage where he was almost a celebrity. Both DC and Marvel wanted him to work for them. He started back in comic books in 1963 and within two years he was wanted by both the companies, and that's how the whole Adam Austin thing got started. You go through stages where one day you're a celebrity and the next you're sort of tossed aside, so there was that part of it that we had to deal with. While Stan Lee was at Marvel things were very settled, very comfortable but after that things became very unsettled.

How do you help Gene in his work?

I have no ability or interest in drawing. However, I critique Gene's work because he sometimes asks and sometimes I plain volunteer! I have to say I influence the final outcome of the work he's done over the past twenty years in that I consider myself "Jane Everybody." If I like it, most fans will like it, if I don't understand what I'm looking at, most fans won't understand either. If I criticize something about the artwork in a given panel or page, Gene will really bellyache and get all defensive, but he always corrects the work and winds up thanking me! He's the funniest and sweetest guy. We get along great because we kid one another a lot. ❖

Wonder Woman convention sketch Wonder Woman ®& *TM 1999 DC Comics. All rights reserved.*

How Gene Colan Creates Comics

Let's talk a little about the Gene Colan style of art. You're very well known for your shadows, and you're also known for your theatrical style. What films and filmmakers do you like to draw your inspiration from?
I love Martin Scorsese. I love the way he tells stories. I love *Raging Bull.* I love the drama he puts behind it. I love Brian DePalma's work very much. He's very artistic.

As part of your theatrical styling, you utilize a lot of unusual angles and perspectives. Do you consciously strive to do this, or does this just happen as the scenes unfold?
Well, I read the script, and I see how interesting can I make it. I am influenced by film, especially films of the 1940's when everything coming out of Hollywood was in black & white. You never see a Warner Brothers film without a storm, without a rain scene in it somewhere. It always has wet pavements and a highly dramatic noir type of storytelling. [My style] was influenced by a lot of that, and I tried to put it into my work. Actually, my work is better suited for black and white than color.

While you're better known for the shadow work and theatrical styling, you also convey motion so well. You don't just use swoosh lines, you put in blurs, ghost images, vibrations, movements in other objects nearby . . .
Makes it move!

Do you consider this to be a forte of yours?
Well, you know, you'd be surprised how much information you can get from a Disney film. Did you ever watch the Disney characters move about that way with the double images and the blurry aftermath of the speed lines when the scene is moving fast? I've used that. I've incorporated that. Because it makes it look like it's really moving. I want the reader to feel the action, I want to put him off balance if I can. Even though it's not mentioned, I very often slant the panels. Instead of making the panels straight up and down, I slant them. Because if there's a moody or a dramatic presentation on that page, it gets the reader dizzy. It dazzles them a little bit, and that's what I try to do. When there's nothing on the page that's all that important, if there's a lot of talking heads, then I generally straighten out the panels because there's nothing exciting about it. I try to, within the drawing itself, do something interesting. The only time I really slant them is when there's action or something very brooding or mystifying is about to take place, then I set the reader up for that.

What kind of pencils do you use?
Right now I'm using a 6B. I used to use HB. In the summer the weather would affect the lead, and I wouldn't get images as dark as I wanted them, because it was almost like drawing under water. So I would change it to a 2B and gradually work my way up to a 6B.

You're a very tight penciller?
Yes. Pretty tight. But difficult, very difficult for anyone to ink.

Why do you think that is?
Because I have a lot of halftones in there. I did it for myself, and I figured, let the inker figure out what he wants to do. Other artists were more linear. John Buscema was quite linear, but it was all there. He wasn't too heavy on the blacks; he could be when he wanted to be. But I always was — everything I did was very dark and somber.

In one of your other interviews you talked about the large size of the original pages being intimidating, but later the industry moved to a smaller page. Did you like that?
I loved it! It seemed like the work would go quicker. The panels were smaller. When you have a large page, you tend to work more. You tend to put more things in the panels, because the panels are bigger, and you're intimidated by that. You figure I've got to fill in all the space? But when the panels are smaller you tend to think in a smaller way: it's hard to show a calvary charge when you've got a little panel to work on. But as you go through the years working at the small size you begin to compensate for it, and draw in a better way to fill in the spaces. You get used to drawing that way. Like you would get used to drawing large and felt you had to draw everything. Then you get used to drawing small, and you can still put in almost everything. It's just a quicker way of drawing, I think. It's more comfortable. You get to see everything all at once. It's right in front of you, and it's a compact version of what you're doing. Maybe you can design the page better because you see it all at one shot.

Do you enjoy working in any medium besides pencils?

I've done some painting. It has nothing to do with comics though, it's for enjoyment. I have some ideas I'd like to sooner or later develop, hopefully sooner. I've painted pictures of my family, some interesting scenes, boys sleigh riding in the winter. The paintings are not in totally full color either. They are muted, almost like sepia colors. But they were done a long time ago when I had an opportunity to do it, and I haven't done anything like that since. I have some plans in mind. When I have a chance to do it, I'll do it. ❖

IT WAS TIME TO ACT. STANHOPE SLIPPED AWAY FROM HIS ROOMING HOUSE STILL OWING BACK RENT, LEAVING EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE ONE THING HE VALUED...
I-I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU THIS EARLY... WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE CARRYING?
MY MAKE-UP KIT. DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE IT BEHIND. I CAME TO SAY GOOD-BY...
I'M GOING TO CALIFORNIA. JUST AS YOU ADVISED, MR. IVORS...
BUT... THE GLOVES! YOU DON'T USUALLY WEAR GLOVES... WHY...?
I DON'T USUALLY WORRY ABOUT FINGERPRINTS!
UP TO THAT MOMENT, STANHOPE HAD BEEN UNCERTAIN HOW FAR IT WOULD GO, BUT AS HE SAW THE OLD MAN'S FACE GROW PALE WITH FEAR, AS HE THOUGHT OF THE HOURS LISTENING TO IVOR'S BABBLE, AS HE REMEMBERED THE TERRIBLE STENCH AND DISGUSTING PREENING OF THE PIGEONS... HE LUNGED!
ONCE, IN SUMMER STOCK, HE'D PLAYED OTHELLO. HIS LEADING LADY HAD COMPLAINED OF HIS STRONG GRIP IN THE FINAL SCENE, OF THE BRUISES IT LEFT ON HER NECK. HE'D NEVER REALIZED HOW CARRIED AWAY HE GOT. EVEN NOW, STANHOPE WAS NOT COMPLETELY CONSCIOUS OF THE WHEEL CHAIR TURNING OVER OR THE LONG, PITIFUL DEATH RATTLE EMITTING FROM IVOR'S THROAT!

From "For The Birds," Eerie #10 ©& TM 1999 Warren Publishing Co. All rights reserved.

Landmark Collaborations

Gene Colan

You've mentioned a fondness for certain inkers in the past. Who were some of the best inkers for you?
Tom Palmer. I loved his work very much. I love Al Williamson's work because he captures, and so did Tom, an awful lot of what I do. They could instinctively read what I was trying to do. My work is not the easiest stuff to ink. The pencils are complex. Very few inkers, either don't want to do it or they're afraid to tackle it because I have halftones in there. I'm not a linear artist, I put in shading and stuff like that that takes time to do. The pen and the ink are different tools altogether, and you cannot capture those in between greys unless you take the time and trouble and know how to do that. Al Williamson does.

You've been fortunate to work with some very talented writers. Who were some of your favorites to work with?
I think Don McGregor's a very good writer, wonderful writer, and we did *Nathaniel Dusk* for quite a few issues, and a few other things too. I would like to work with him again. I've mentioned *Ragamuffins*. It was something so completely different from what you would generally see in comics, a very nostalgic kind of strip. It's about young kids growing up in a small town. I don't think it has tremendous interest for dyed-in-the-wool comic book fans, but I loved it. It reminded me of some of the things I grew up with. He never went lightly through a story and did things willy nilly; he researched everything. He is a pleasure to work with. His stories are very descriptive and very real. He should have, and maybe will some day, go into film. I've enjoyed working with Don. He would always come up with types of stories that I never had the chance to do before; like *Ragamuffins.*

THE MOUNTAIN WALL OF WATER RISES INEXORABLY...
...BEGINNING TO PAUSE FOR ONE TIMELESS INSTANT LIKE SOME GIANT BIRD OF PREY ABOUT TO SWOOP DOWN UPON ITS HELPLESS PREY.
THE INSTANT PASSES AND COUNTLESS GALLONS OF WATER COLLAPSE ON HONG KONG, POUNDING HER CROWDED STREETS -- WASHING AWAY ALL BEFORE IT...
...FORCING THE CITY'S CITIZENS TO FLEE IN BLIND PANIC.
From Marvel Comics Super Special #14. Tom Palmer inks.
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There's Steve Gerber, he was very funny. He wrote stuff in the business like no one has ever written. I always thought that he was so good he should be writing for film too. I found his work so funny and joyous that I'd be laughing my head off before I even put down a line of artwork. He got me going, he got my interest up there and I was able to very easily slide into illustrating his stories. Of course, it was wonderful working with Marv on *Tomb of Dracula* and now again on our most recent project.

There was Greg Potter who did *Jemm* for DC, and I illustrated that one. I thought he was a great writer. He had a science fiction style.

There's Chris Golden. I did one story that he wrote for Marvel somewhat recently called Blade. That was the last Blade story I did, and then right after that I left. He's a very good writer. I'd like to be able to do some work with him again.

TOM PALMER

Gene Colan has the reputation for being a difficult person to ink. Would you agree with that?
No. Absolutely not. Probably the first person I ever inked was Gene. I had done some work with Wally Wood, for only a matter of weeks really, and he gave my name to Sol Brodsky at Marvel. The first job I did for Marvel was a Dr. Strange story that I pencilled and Dan Adkins inked. It was my first real job in comics, and frankly Dan helped a great deal because there were a lot of soft spots in what I did. They brought Gene in on that next issue [# 172] and Sol said, "We have somebody else pencilling, would you like to ink it?" I had never inked anybody before and I jumped in with both feet.

The one reason that I had success or enjoyed working with Gene was that I would draw into what he was rendering. His pencilling was done more in a soft way, and if you look closely at it, there were a lot of things going on inside those shadows. He's a terrific artist, but a lot of it was covered up with his shading. So I would draw into the shading, and I think that's what, if anything, gave me some advantage over anyone else. But I would never consider him difficult.

THE VAMPIRE IS DEAD! NOW SWIFTLY, BEFORE I GO MAD--
--I ABJURE THE SPELL OF DARKNESS FROM THY BROW!
AND NOW--
--I MUST CALL WONG BACK TO THIS DI-MENSION!
OLD FRIEND, BY THE POWER OF THE UNDEAD AND THE POWER OF THE ALL-LIFE--
--MYSELF!
LIGHT BURSTS IN THE MYSTIC, AND THEN SHADOW, AND THEN BOTH AT ONCE-- BURSTING, CRASHING, SEARING... DYING!
AT DAWN. .
WONG! YOU'RE ..ALL RIGHT!
AND YOU, MASTER! WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
A CHOICE-IN-A-LIFETIME BATTLE, WONG--
--A TERRIBLE THING
I COULD NEVER PERFORM SUCH FEATS AGAIN, FOR THE MIXTURE OF GOOD AND EVIL WOULD BE TOO MUCH TO BEAR A SECOND TIME!
THANK GOD, DRACULA WILL MENACE MAN NO MORE!
NEXT: IN DR STRANGE #15, ON SALE IN THIRTY DAYS: THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP!

From Dr. Strange #13 Tom Palmer inks.
Dr. Strange ©& *TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights*

I remember one thing that would get kind of tricky. There were a lot of dark pencils and I would take a kneaded eraser and dab over his pencils and get rid of some of the very heavy blacks. Not erase them, just soften them, but in doing so I could see what I was doing. I noticed some letterers had to erase some of his pencilling before they could letter because they couldn't see their ink, or their lettering. I haven't worked with Gene recently so I don't know if he still pencils that way. He may pencil much more softly today.

You worked on many projects with Gene. Does any one stand out for you, for any reason?
The third issue of *Dr. Strange* that I inked over Gene came out and the coloring was horrendous. I called up Roy Thomas and I asked if I could color the following issue. I remember it was the "Sons of Satannish" issue and Dr. Strange was in New York City. Marie Severin gave me a quick primer on how to color and gave me color charts. I really put my heart and soul into that first coloring job. I think I got the most satisfaction from *Dr. Strange*. It was always enjoyable working with Gene. He probably spoiled me in many ways. I was fresh and brand new in the business and didn't know any better; I just figured his was the way it was done. Gene's work is not in the traditional comic book style, it's ahead of its time in a lot of ways. It was more illustrative, especially if you saw his pencils. His pencils were absolutely beautiful — there was all this soft rendering and modeling. When you got down to inking it, it would take on a stark quality. But the pencils themselves were absolutely beautiful.

Since Gene was the first artist you worked with, was it difficult for you when you began working with other pencillers?

Tomb of Dracula # *41* Tom Palmer inks. *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

TOM PALMER

No. John Buscema worked much looser, and you had to bring more to it. You had to bring more drawing to it. From the ground up John was terrific, and whatever he put down was perfect. You could just layer on top of it. With Gene you had to get into it more and bring it out. Neal [Adams] rendered with a pencil; you had to make your inks work over it. You had to kind of draw over that rendering with your ink. Recently artists have tried to pencil as if they were inking, or they would want you to ink every little line, and line weight and everything else. I guess there's merit to that, but at that point I feel you might as well ink it yourself. If you've gone that far you probably waste a lot of time on your pencilling. Sometimes too much is put into rendering those pencils so perfectly and missing the real object, which is to tell a good story. You can have the most beautiful artwork in the whole field and a poor story and the comic book is not good at all. I think Gene is one of those people that is unique in how he tells a story. He can do things with the anatomy, with expressions . . . I think he was perfect for *Dr. Strange* and even more perfect for *Dracula*. I loved the superhero work he did, like *Iron Man*. I think at the time the style was a little bit more like Kirby. But Gene survived all this time because he is a good artist and he has a unique approach to telling a story.

Marvel Comics Super Special #10
Tom Palmer inks. *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

What would you say makes him unique?

Well, one thing as I stated before is his panel layouts. I think Gene's grounding was more illustrative and he supported that by using some photographs. If you get a good black and white photograph there's a lot of black and white in it and that's what I think influenced his style. He also has a very cinematic style of telling a story. I would love to see Gene direct a movie or even doing storyboards for one. There are so many people that remember those *Dracula* books; Todd McFarlane for one. I think Gene made it unique, he was the man of the hour for that book. He was perfect for that book.

In addition to Dr. Strange and Tomb of Dracula, what other projects did you work on together?

There were a handful of *Daredevil* issues. It was right after *Dr. Strange*, and I guess they felt I worked well with Gene. We did one or two graphic novels, we did the Star-Lord [*Marvel Comics Super Special* #10], the movie adaptation of *Meteor* [*Marvel Comics Super Special* #14], and the movie adaptation of *Jaws II* [*Marvel Comics Super Special* #6]. I did some Black Panther work with him also. It was a backup for *Marvel Comics Presents* [#13–#37]. I did that for over a year back in the late 1980's. I think that was the last time I worked with Gene.

Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't touched upon?

Dr. Strange was really the first book that I worked on and worked over Gene. He was very generous with his approval and kind words. I didn't know right away, but he liked what I was doing, and it was nice to hear that after the fact. Maybe I didn't always do my best at the beginning, but he certainly put up with it and he didn't complain. When you reflect back on something like that . . . it was your first step, and it takes on a little bit more importance because of the books. They look terrific. Some of the issues came out quite well. Even to this day I'm still proud of them. I think it worked out very well. I have fond memories of working with Gene. It's a shame that our paths don't cross more often. I'm sure it would be just as much fun to work with him today. ❖

PRO FILES

MARV WOLFMAN

What was the first work of Gene's that you remember seeing?
Romance comics and some of the Warren magazines. I had been a fan of Gene's work for years before I first worked with him.

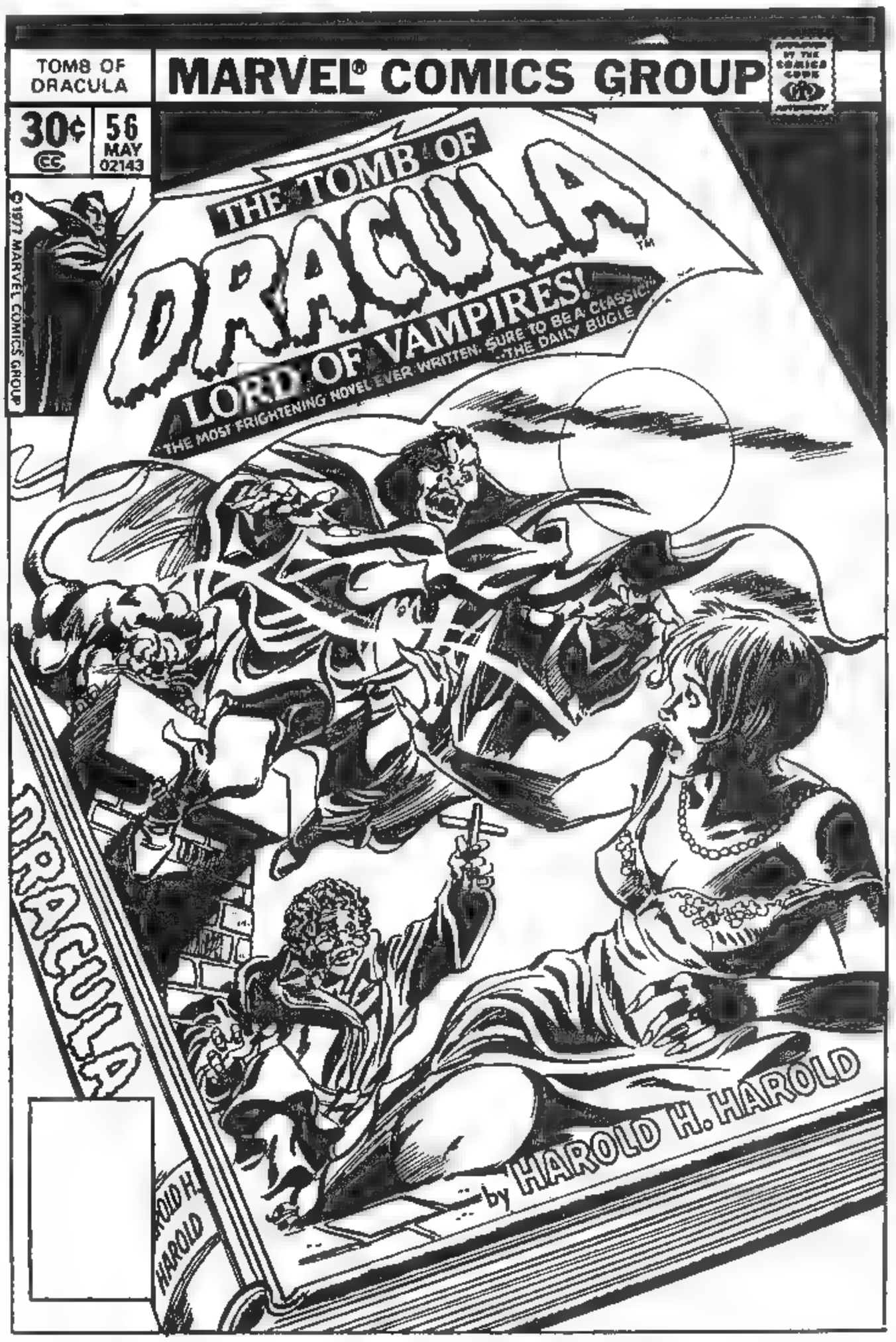
What was it about his work that appealed to you?
Simply put, his faces. He makes his characters very real. You think you know his people.

Was the first thing that the two of you worked together on Tomb of Dracula?
No, we did a short mystery story for *Tower of Shadows*.

How did the latest project you did with Gene, The Curse of Dracula, come about?
Mike Richardson, publisher of Dark Horse, saw me at a convention and asked if I'd be interested in doing a new version of Dracula with Gene. I almost hesitated — it's hard going up against something that was considered as special as *Tomb of Dracula* was. If I failed to do a good job people would say I didn't have it any more. Thank God the reaction has been uniformly positive.

Had the way you collaborated changed much since the last time the two of you had worked together?
Yes. Since I wasn't the editor, I couldn't control the whole process. I didn't design the covers and couldn't get some of the problems here and there fixed up. In terms of working with Gene it meant I couldn't insist on the straight up and down panels I prefer to see in *Dracula* (with his special layouts being the surprise rather than the norm). On the other hand, I think *Curse of Dracula* was perhaps Gene's finest job in years and only I know what's missing. Gene's art was better than I had seen it since the last *Dracula*. The two of us work very well together and I hope we will continue to do so.

How did the Night Force project that the two of you worked on come about?
DC was interested in my doing a new horror comic after *Tomb of Dracula*, but I didn't want to repeat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THE TOMB OF DRACULA™
LORD OF VAMPIRES!
"THE MOST FRIGHTENING NOVEL EVER WRITTEN. SURE TO BE A CLASSIC!" ..THE DAILY BUGLE
DRACULA
by HAROLD H. HAROLD

Tomb of Dracula *# 56 Tom Palmer inks.* *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

MARV WOLFMAN

myself. Instead, I came up with the idea of doing an anthology title which would have semi-continuing characters. Also, while *Tomb of Dracula* was purely imagination, I would take situations for *Night Force* from 'true' accounts of the supernatural and occult matters. At the time DC felt the book was the darkest comic they had ever published — which shows how times have changed.

Can you describe what the collaborative process is like when the two of you work together? How much plotting input does he usually have?
I would plot the book and send it to Gene who would draw it. He'd rarely have anything to do with the story. Occasionally, he would ask me to put something in a story — like he kept asking for a dog story in *Tomb of Dracula*, so I would emphasize Saint, Quincy Harker's dog. But other than that he wasn't part of the plotting process. ❖

STEVE GERBER

What was the creative process like when the two of you worked together on Howard The Duck?
Mechanically, not very different from the process with any other artist. I wrote the plots, Gene drew the story in pencil, and then I added the dialogue. We talked every so often, but we weren't working closely together.

As a writer, you rely on artists to visualize your ideas. How did Gene's interpretation of your ideas compare with other artists?
This is what's interesting. For some reason, Gene and I "clicked" almost uncannily on *Howard the Duck*. I would see something in my head, type it up, send it out, and the picture I'd get back from Gene was almost eerily similar to what I had visualized. Sure, in part, this was because I was playing to Gene's strengths as an artist. There's no comics artist I can think of offhand who draws human facial expressions as well as Gene and very few who are as good as Gene at setting a mood. But it really was more than that. I think Gene somehow managed to find exactly the same mental reference point in the characters that I did. Our visions meshed seamlessly on that book.

It's funny — if you look at some of the later *Howard The Ducks*, after I was escorted off the book, there's a bizarre dissonance between the stories and the art. Gene was still drawing the duck as he and I had always seen him, but the writer was scripting a different character entirely.

Howard The Duck ©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

PRO FILES

DON MCGREGOR

What was the first work of Gene's that you remember seeing?
When I was a kid, I first discovered comics when I was about five or six years old. It wasn't school that taught me to read, it was comic books. In those days if you went to the variety store they used to hang the comic books from wires from the ceiling and they would go all around the ceiling. I can vividly recall that was my first sight of comics. When you picked a particular comic that you wanted, the store owner had a long pole with a hook on it and he'd snag it and it would whip the whole thing around and then they would pull that one down and you'd be able to buy your comic book. The first comic book I ever read was *Hopalong Cassidy*, which brings me to Gene Colan. It wasn't a Gene Colan issue of *Hopalong Cassidy* that I first saw, but within a few years Gene was drawing *Hopalong Cassidy*. So, at that time, I didn't know Gene's name, I just read *Hopalong Cassidy* comics and loved *Hopalong Cassidy*. Later on I get to know it was Gene's work when they start giving out credits at Marvel. I have always loved his work.

When did you first work with Gene?
It was issue #26 of *Amazing Adventures* featuring Killraven. This was the issue just before Craig Russell took over. Gene drew one issue of Killraven and it was *great*. He did wonderful things with those characters. I remember there was this serpent stallion that was half horse and half serpent and Gene did this really great bucking bronco ride with Killraven and the serpent. So that was the first time I got to work with Gene. Writing is hard work for me, but the fun part of it is when you get to work with an artist of Gene Colan's caliber. When he first sends in that artwork I'm that five-year old kid again.

Of the projects that you have worked on with Gene, do you have a favorite?
It's hard to suggest one, but certainly one of my favorites is *Ragamuffins* which was printed directly from Gene's pencils and Steve Orloff colored it. *Ragamuffins* is a little strip about kids growing up in the 1950's. It was the first time that a book was printed from pencils. I really wanted to print Gene's pencils, and I held off on doing that strip for years. *Ragamuffins* wouldn't be like *Sabre*, there would not be this larger-than-life quality about it, there would not be these incredibly visual dynamic characters and/or situations. This is just going to be about little kids. The first story is about this little kid going to kindergarten, the second story is about recess, and the third story is about coming home from school. Gene really captured those kids. I remember there was this one sequence that he captured just perfectly. A mother had just crossed

Ragamuffins *©& TM 1999 Don McGregor and Gene Colan. All rights reserved.*

DON MCGREGOR

main street with her little boy, and said, "Now you walk straight up to the school. Don't take any side tracks, don't cross the street." The kid is very dutifully listening to the mother, and as soon as she turns her back to walk away with the kid's little sister you see the look on the kid's face. I had told Gene that what I wanted was this look on the kid's face so you knew that anything was possible — he's free! And Gene captured that look in the kid's eyes, the expression on his face, and I knew we had it. I just knew that this book was going to go. For some reason, there's just an affinity I have with Gene. I've often thought that Gene really understood what I wanted those characters to look like. And that's one of the magnificent things about Gene, he's one of the great naturals in comics.

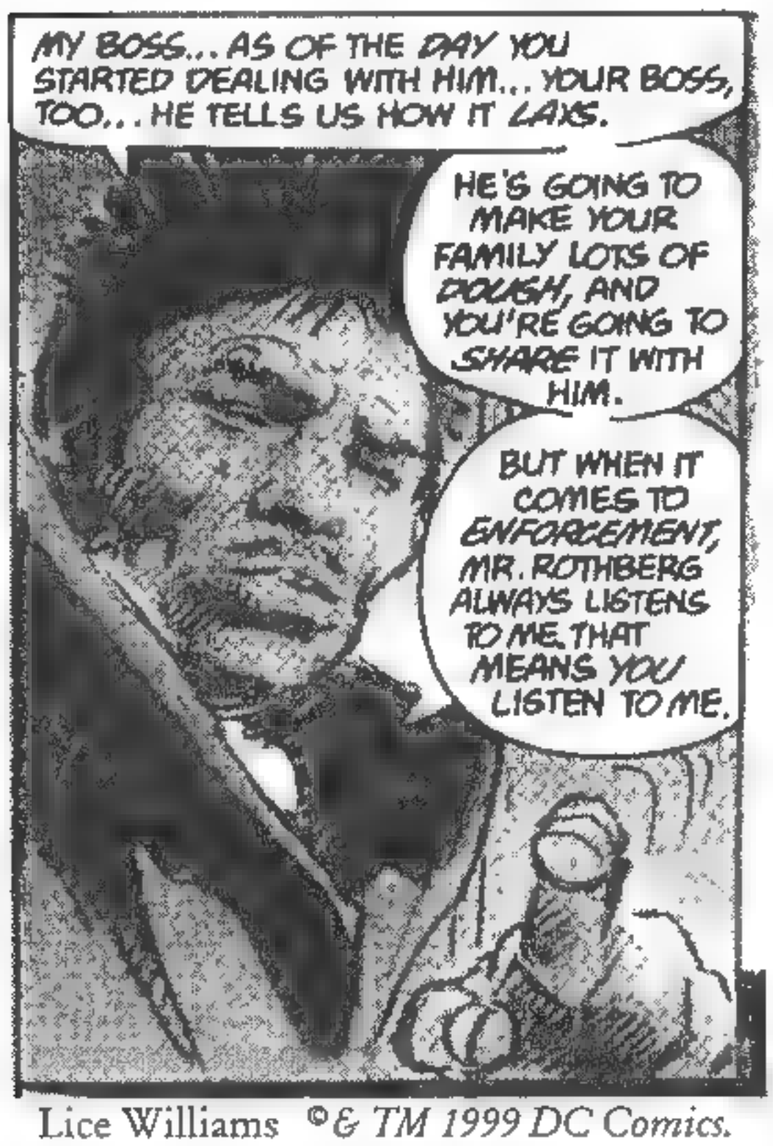
That's why I wanted to use just Gene's pencils [on *Ragamuffins*] . I feel that if anybody inks Gene, outside of Tom Palmer who retains the integrity and the approach of Gene's pencils, it wouldn't be Gene's anymore. There were many other good inkers for Gene, but often times it becomes more their work than his.

Both Nathaniel Dusk series were also printed directly from Gene's pencils too. Was this the original plan?
When we were doing *Nathaniel Dusk*, Gene had done a bunch of character sketches on the major people that would populate that series. Gene immediately understood exactly what I wanted out of a 1930's hard-boiled private eye. He knew what Nathaniel Dusk should look like. DC got an inker to ink the sketches. They told me, "Don, when you see it, you're just going to love it." It's not that this guy wasn't a good inker, he *was* a good inker, the problem was it was no longer Gene Colan's Nathaniel Dusk. So it was no longer the Nathaniel Dusk that Don McGregor had in his head. It was a totally different approach, and that's when I went in and begged them to please please print Gene's pencils. I talked to Dick Giordano about doing *Nathaniel Dusk* in pencils and he agreed.

NOW, REMEMBER, RANDY, YOU DON'T EVER CROSS MAIN STREET. GOT IT?
YES, MOM.
AND REMEMBER, WHEN YOU GET OUT OF SCHOOL, YOU WALK STRAIGHT BACK. CHERYL AND I WILL BE WALKING UP TO MEET YOU.
AND DON'T DAWDLE.
MOMMY, HOW COME DOLLS DON'T PEE-PEE?

Ragamuffins ©& TM 1999 Don McGregor and Gene Colan. All rights reserved.

When the first issue of *Nathaniel Dusk* came out I got a call from Gene, really upset, "Don, what happened with the book?! This is terrible!" I said, "Gene, I don't know what you're talking about. I don't understand, what's the problem?" He says, "All the line work dropped out." So I told him that I hadn't even seen the book yet. And when I did see it, Gene was absolutely right, it had. What they tried to do was shoot the tone for one page, whereas with pencils, you really have to shoot it *by* page for the lights and the darks. These are the things that just . . . they dishearten you. To see so much of that lost . . . they couldn't even reprint those *Nathaniel Dusk* books overseas because they didn't have good film on them. Now the second series came out much better, and in fact, along with *Ragamuffins* that second *Nathaniel Dusk* series is one of my all time favorites; part of it was working with Gene and part of it was the packaging. DC was really great about that. Originally, I wanted more pages for the first issue of the second series because I wasn't going to be anywhere near where I wanted to be at the end of the first issue. They ended up having each issue double-sized. That was great! I knew I was going to have all the room I needed, all the time I needed for research. And I knew that Gene would pick up on everything I gave him and give it back to me in spades.


MY BOSS... AS OF THE DAY YOU STARTED DEALING WITH HIM... YOUR BOSS, TOO... HE TELLS US HOW IT LAYS.
HE'S GOING TO MAKE YOUR FAMILY LOTS OF DOUGH, AND YOU'RE GOING TO SHARE IT WITH HIM.
BUT WHEN IT COMES TO ENFORCEMENT, MR. ROTHBERG ALWAYS LISTENS TO ME. THAT MEANS YOU LISTEN TO ME.
Lice Williams ©& TM 1999 DC Comics. *All rights reserved.*

Gene had done a marvelous job on that series. I'm very fond of it. There are so many sequences that are so wonderful . . . there's a scene where Dusk goes in to talk to a woman who has had a very rough life and they're out on the fire escape and it's all lit by neon, and it's all light and dark and shadows falling all over the faces. Gene really captured the ambiance of that scene. He showed the weariness that's there in both Dusk and the woman he's talking to. It's just an incredibly wonderful scene. You could do a dialogue scene with Gene and Gene understands the body language.

Gene called me when we were working on the second series and with Gene it's always late-night calls. I had put into the script a character called Lice Williams. I described him as the type of person that if you saw him walking down the street, you wanted to cross it and be on the other side because no normal human would want anything to do with him. He's trouble. This guy will kill you for nothing. I wanted him to look like all the blood had been flushed out of his face, and I wanted him to look like he had been in the electric chair, so I spiked his hair up and took the blood out of his face. So Gene calls me up and he says, "Don, I don't think I can do it that way." "Gene, no this'll really work, I know you can do this." He says, "No, I don't know." Gene goes to incredible lengths about not wanting to do it. And so I said, "Well, if you feel that strongly about it, I don't want you to feel forced into drawing a character that you feel uncomfortable drawing." It wouldn't be good for Gene, and I wanted Gene to be comfortable with it. So I said, "Well, if you really want it that way Gene, that's fine." Pages come in a week later, and guess what? It was exactly the way I originally wanted it. I called up Gene and I said, "Gene, my memory must be going. Maybe I'm not remembering correctly but didn't you call me and didn't we have a conversation for about an hour and a half?" And he said, "What conversation was that Don?" And I said, "You know, that conversation about Lice Williams." And he said, "Oh, how do you like the way he looks?" I said, "Perfect Gene. Just perfect." And then he just laughed.

You also worked together on a Black Panther series for Marvel Comics Presents [#13-#37]?

Yes, it was called "Panther's Quest" and it dealt with South Africa. There are two sequences in there that Gene did that are so perfect. There's a sequence where the Black Panther's caught up in barbed wire and he's really torn to pieces and bleeding. He manages to get

DON MCGREGOR

himself out of the barbed wire and he's crawling along in a ditch alongside a dirt road. There's a guy who's a South African miner named Zanti that lives in one of the townships and he's on his way to get the bus to go to work. Zanti's walking by and he sees the Black Panther down in the ditch, and Zanti knows this is trouble. Gene just caught Zanti so well. I did a six panel sequence where Zanti looks at him and starts to walk away. He doesn't want anything to do with it, it's just trouble for him. It could mean trouble for his wife and his kids, he just doesn't need this. And I wanted the sequence where he looks, turns, starts to walk away, and then you just see him shrug. He just can't do it. He can't leave this guy bleeding down in the ditch. And then he turns around and comes back. There's one panel in that sequence where Gene just captured that body language so beautifully. It's just right there, there isn't another word that's needed.

YES, HE WOULD LEAVE.
IT WAS THE BEST THING TO DO
NOW WHAT ARE YOU STOPPING FOR?
THEY PUT YOU IN PRISON THEY CATCH YOU. MESSING WITH HIM, AND THEN WHEN WILL YOU GET A CHANCE TO SEE YOUR FAMILIES
THERE'S A WATER SPIGOT A WAYS BACK. CAN'T HURT TO GIVE IT SOME WATER.
NO MILITARY VEHICLE MIGHT DO THIS QUICK
STUPID FOOL COVERS HIS FACE.

Black Panther Tom Palmer inks. *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

There's a second sequence where Zanti has to say good-bye to a little boy who wants to come with him. Zanti knows that he's going off into a very dangerous situation, and he doesn't know how it's going to turn out, and there's no way for him to dodge it because if he does he probably won't be able to live with himself, and face up to himself as a father to his son. But the kid is going to use everything he's got to get the father to stay. They walk toward the vista and they're so far away we can't hear what they're saying and you just see the body language between the father and the son. It's so quintessential, real, so human, and that's the kind of thing that Gene Colan is marvelous at doing.

To tell you a funny Gene Colan story concerning that storyline, later on there's a little boy who gets burned during a necklace ceremony that the Black Panther tries to stop. A necklace ceremony in South Africa in those days was where they would put a rubber tire around somebody's neck that people in the township felt were spying on them for the white establishment and they would douse it in gasoline and set it one fire. I struggled with that sequence for a long time. There was two little boys named Theodore and Wally in the story , and I thought it would be like Wally and the Beaver in South Africa. And when this ceremony happens where this innocent little kid gets burned. The story was broken into eight page chapters. So this one chapter *[MCP #28] was* just the Black Panther's efforts to take this kid and get him to a hospital. He takes him to a white hospital, and at first they weren't going to treat him, but then they do and they really try to save this kid. That chapter was all about the Black Panther's efforts to save this kid. And at the end of it the kid dies. So when Gene is working on that chapter of the story, I get a call from him one night, and he says, "Don, I

couldn't do it." This is probably around 11:30 at night. I said, "I don't understand, you couldn't do what?" "I just couldn't draw it Don," Gene said. "Can't draw what?" "I just couldn't draw it, it was just too sad, too terrible." "Well, what do you mean, what did you do?" "I changed it." "What do you mean you changed it?" "The kid lives Don." And so now I'm going crazy, saying Gene, we're letting everybody off the hook, we're letting the reader off the hook. The point is this little kid is a victim, and everybody is a victim . . . and I'm really getting upset, and Gene is saying, "I'm sorry Don, it was just too tragic. I can't draw it that way." And Gene must have went on for a good ten or fifteen minutes, and then he says, "Hey Don, I drew it just the way you wanted it." I said, "Gene! I'm gonna come through this phone wire and grab you by the throat!" He's so wonderful. I've had such great times with Gene.

Are there any other anecdotes that you would like to share with us?
Gene drew the second *Detective Incorporated* series that I did. In the story there's a sequence in there where I wanted to have shots of Hopalong Cassidy in the background. For anyone who knew of Gene's work, it would be such an inside thing. They'd look at it and say, "look at this, Gene was drawing Hopalong thirty years ago and now here he is drawing Hopalong again." So I put in the script. I get a call from Gene and he says, "Don, you know, I haven't drawn William Boyd in years and I don't have my reference, and I'd really rather do the *Maltese Falcon*, do Bogart." So I said, "Okay, but that's really not what I wanted. I really wanted Hopalong Cassidy. I thought it would be a really nice inside little tribute to your work." And he just says, "No, no, I don't think I should do it." So I said, "Okay, fine, do it the other way." And of course it comes in and there's Hopalong Cassidy, looking just like William Boyd. And there you go.

Black Panther Tom Palmer inks. *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

I don't even know of any other artist that would do something like this. Last Christmas, I get a package and it's really heavy. I'm wondering, what the heck is this? And if I'm getting artwork, I'm thinking that it's artwork for one of the books I'm working on now. It was two hundred pages of original Gene Colan artwork on various books that we have worked on together over the years, and a note just wishing me a Merry Christmas. How many people do you know in this business like that? That's Gene Colan. That's the Gene Colan I know. He's just a tremendous guy. He put so much work and effort into bringing those stories to life. He cared enough about those stories to give that energy, to give that talent, to give that vision that he has. I can never thank him enough.

I have been tremendously fortunate in my career to have worked with a number of very talented people

DON MCGREGOR

like Craig Russell, Marshall Rogers, Dwayne Turner, Tom Yeates and of course Gene. One of the beautiful things about Gene, is that it's not just that he can put characters in a panel together, people are always drawing characters in panels together, but in Gene Colan's work they're relating to each other. There's just some kind of subtle body language or expressions that Gene is just able to get it. He understands what you're going for. He can capture any moment.

We've had terrific times. Just sitting with Gene and talking with him. Some of my best experiences in working in comics has been working with Gene. He's a wonderful guy. ❖

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PROFILES

STAN LEE

When you think of Gene Colan, what immediately comes to mind?
Some very beautiful artwork.

How would you describe Gene's importance in the history of Marvel Comics?
Oh, I'd say Gene was very important in our history because he did so many of our strips in the beginning. He, like so many of our artists, was very versatile. He could do romance, horror, superheroes, whatever it was he could do it and he did it with great style.

Is there a certain type of story that you think Gene is better suited to tell? For example, superhero or horror?
No. I think he was good at everything. For some reason lately when I think of his artwork, I think of the spooky stuff like *Dr. Strange*. But basically I remember he did *Captain America* and that was great. He did *Daredevil* and that was great. Gene can do anything.

What is Gene like to work with?
He's an absolute pleasure. No temperament at all. Work was always on time, and it was always . . . again, I found that the *best* people, like Kirby and Buscema and Ditko and all of them, contributed work that was always of the same high quality. There was never a weak strip or something that looked like it was batted out or something. Every time Gene brought in a job it was as good as the one before, even if he had to rush it.

What would you say his strongest point as an artist is?
Well, Gene had a great cinematic approach to his artwork. It was like watching a movie. In fact, Gene used to tell me that he used to collect videotapes of movies, and he was greatly influenced by the camera angles and so forth you'd find in a motion picture. His use of close-ups and long shots, the variety and the angle shots were very, very cinematic.

Of everything that he has done, do you have a personal favorite?
Unfortunately I am blessed or cursed, I should say, with the world's worst memory. There was a Daredevil story about a black soldier who loses his eyesight [*Daredevil* #47, "Brother Take My Hand"], and Daredevil helps him during the course of the story. I loved that, it was a great job. And another thing I remember, he did a Captain America story once, and for some reason there were two pages or three pages of nothing happening except Captain America walking in the street. We even got a lot of letters saying how great those pages were. With most other artists those might have been a very dull two or three pages but the way Gene drew them, every panel was as interesting as if it had been a fist fight or something. He just knows how to make things interesting. I remember once he drew a script where there was one panel which was just a close-up of somebody with there hand on the doorknob opening the door and that as interesting to look at as anything else.

Gene was always a perfect gentleman, he was a pleasure to work with, his work was always of the highest quality and I'm very pleased and proud to have done so many stories with him.

NO!
BY ALL THAT'S HOLY MORDO, YOUR SPELL WILL NOT BE COMPLETED! THE CHAOS GATES WILL NOT BE OPENED! THE EARTH WILL NOT DIE!
THIS DR STRANGE SWEARS!

Dr. Strange. ©& *TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

Convention sketch of Iron Man. ©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

Gene is one of your creative influences. How would you say your work been influenced by Gene?
When I first started collecting and reading comics, the artwork was one of the first things that attracted me: only a few artists ever got my attention, and I think one of the main reasons I was such a Marvel junkie in the 1970's was my "Marvel Trinity": John Buscema, Jack Kirby and Gene Colan. If it was something they were drawing, I was interested. Gene's work has always sung to me, spoken to me; his dynamic way with figures, personalities; the way his work carried both realism and the fantastic so well, so artfully. He has one of the most expressive, natural drawing styles I've ever seen. I always dreamed of being able to draw like that, and I still do.

Would you say that your life has also been influenced by Gene and, if so, in what way?
I have the pleasure of being able to call Gene and his wife, Adrienne, my friends. Gene and I talk periodically on the phone, and we have many things in common. I enjoy and value our conversations. He's a great person and a nice guy and we're mutual fans of one another's work, which makes me happy. Knowing that the man whose work I've looked up to and marvelled at all my life seems to approve of what I'm doing makes me proud. It's the kind of validation you look for all your life: a nod from a comic book great like Gene.

Also, looking at Gene's body of work, it humbles me. Just when I think I've amassed a good amount of projects, paintings and illustrations, all I have to do is talk to Gene. His work makes up most of the comics I loved as a kid and beyond . . . that's a lot of drawing.

You talk about loving Gene's comics as a kid. What was the first book of Gene's that you remember reading?
Probably a *Daredevil* book, or possibly *Doctor Strange* . . . my first batch of comics included his work and I just remember being able to distinguish his style immediately from the rest. It had a profound effect on me, seeing Kirby, Buscema and Colan's work back at the age of seven or eight. I was instantly hooked. I even loved the stuff the he did in *Not Brand Ecch*. He had a light and fun style on that book, that contrasted his dynamic, cinematic work.

You've talked about many things that Gene does well as an artist. Of these, what do you think is the area where he is the strongest?
I can't pinpoint it in an intellectual way: it's the look, the feel of the worlds and characters he draws; his work is very cinematic, very dramatic, and for me, exemplifies some of the finest examples of the comic book style of artwork. Gene is a founding father in the medium of dramatic storytelling in graphic form. The way he draws speaks to me on a level that's always been there, even as a kid. I never get tired of looking at his work, and every comic he drew that I come across in a back-issue rack is instantly scooped-up by me. Explaining it in words is probably beyond me. I'm not a critic, and I don't look at Gene's work critically nor would I care to; I know I love it and it speaks to me; hits me hard. To me that's the mark of a true artist; his work affects me in a way I can't explain, it just gets me excited, in much the same way as a Frazetta or a Buscema.

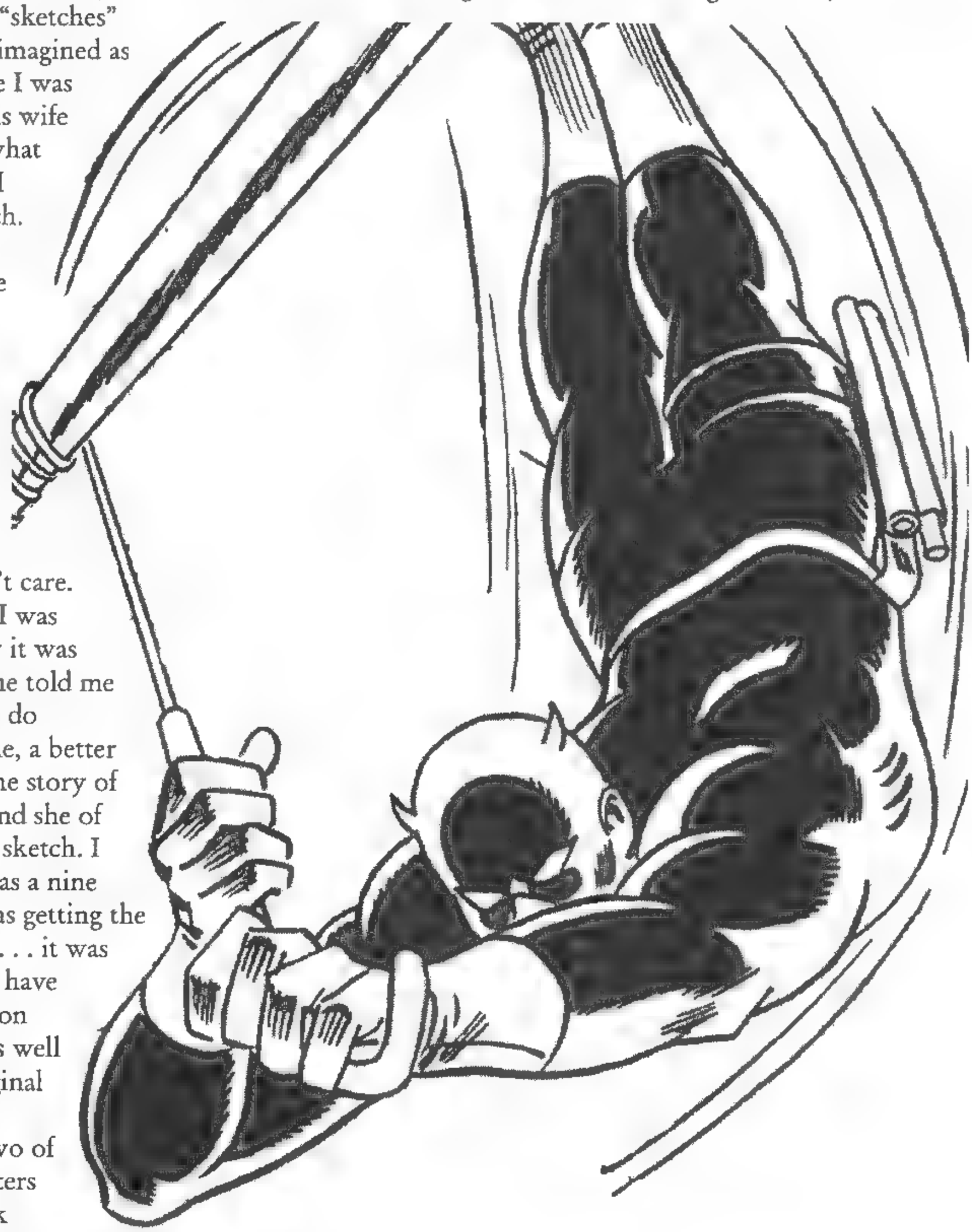
". . . his work is very cinematic, very dramatic, and for me, exemplifies some of the finest examples of the comic book style of artwork."

Knowing Gene as well as you do, are there any anecdotes about Gene that you could share that would be of interest the readers?
I have one, but it takes some setting-up, so here goes:

One year at the San Diego Comic Con, I was sitting near Gene and Adrienne Colan in the Artist's Alley. Adrienne was telling me about this sketch of Daredevil that Gene had done, but aborted because it wasn't working. Adrienne described Daredevil in the drawing as "looking like a jerk", and Gene agreed. The sketch was crumpled and tossed aside and Gene did another that was much improved. As she was telling me this, I got really excited . . . you see, when I was a kid, about nine years old, I used to write letters to Marvel Comics and enclose drawings of my own

characters telling them "they could use them in a comic book if they wanted to." I also asked in a letter once, if there were any discarded sketches lying in the trash, and if they could send me one, even if it was just a throw-away sketch. Somehow I pictured the artists all working in the Marvel "bullpen" together slaving away over the comic pages, and I imagined that there must be a lot of preparatory sketches that were tossed out in the course of drawing comics (don't ask me how I came to this conclusion, I was a fevered little Marvel Zombie, even before the term "Marvel Zombie" even existed.)

I never got any reply, obviously. I had no idea Gene was sitting in his house drawing this stuff, and there were probably many fewer "sketches" lying around than I'd imagined as a child. Anyway, there I was talking to Gene and his wife as an adult, realizing what was happening . . . so I asked her for the sketch. At first she tried to dissuade me, telling me it wasn't any good, and she showed me the partially crumpled sketch. It was a half-finished pencil sketch of Daredevil and true, it wasn't a great drawing, for Gene anyway . . . but I didn't care. It was perfect as far as I was concerned, and I knew it was meant for me. Adrienne told me Gene would be glad to do another drawing for me, a better one, and I told them the story of when I was a kid . . . and she of course let me have the sketch. I couldn't believe it. I was a nine year old again and I was getting the sketch I had asked for . . . it was very cool. Since then I have gotten other commission drawings from Gene as well as picked up some original pages (and Gene did a wonderful sketch of two of my Nocturnals characters for the trade paperback collection, that I cherish). But that crumpled drawing is the most special to me. ❖



Daredevil ©*& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

MARK EVANIER

What would you say was special about Gene Colan's artistic style?
There's a wonderful credibility about everything Gene draws. His people look like people, stand like people, pose like people. This makes his work powerful when he draws human scenes — and super-powerful when he draws super-human scenes. No matter how bizarre the subject matter gets — whether it's talking ducks or mystic realms or Dracula himself — Gene makes it believable.

How would you describe Gene Colan's role/importance in the history of Marvel Comics?
Gene was the first Marvel artist who broke up his pages in a manner unlike the symmetrical grids that Kirby, Ditko and the others had been using. His style was nothing like what had been seen before in Marvel Comics and yet he achieved the same energized, larger-than-life storytelling that Kirby had achieved and which had become the hallmark of Marvel. In so doing, he expanded the whole notion of what Marvels — and fantasy comics, in general — could be.

Do you remember the first time you noticed Gene Colan's work in a comic book?
First time I was aware of Gene's work in comics was probably on one of the DC war books. But I remember going to Pico Drugs, where I used to buy my comics, and seeing a comic fan standing at the rack with a new issue that had him in rapture. It was the first *Sub-Mariner* story by "Adam Austin" and this kid was so excited by the art that he was giddy. He was showing it to strangers and saying, "Look at this! Isn't this terrific?" (And this wasn't even Colan's best. The kid probably went orgasmic at the *Iron Man* work that followed a few months later.)

PETER DAVID

Do you remember the first time you became aware of Gene's work?
Sure. His work on *Iron Man* is definitely what caught my eye, although *Sub-Mariner* was a close second.

What is it about Gene's work that you like?
His unique anatomical style. That and his peerless skill for conveying unusual mood.

What do you feel is Gene's strongest point as an artist?
His dynamic character poses.

Of the projects Gene has done do you have a favorite and if so what is it and why?
That would have to be *Tomb of Dracula*. I think his run on that is unparalleled, not only in his own work, but possibly in comics.

Have you ever worked with Gene on a project?
Yes, we did two issues of *Wolverine* [#9 and #24] together.

If you could work on any project with Gene, what would it be?
Doc Strange, just because I was a big fan of Gene's work on that character, and I always had a fondness for the good doctor.

YOU'VE AS MANY INCARNATIONS AS DRACULA, OLD ENEMY. I SHOULD HAVE SNUFFED OUT YOUR LIFE THE MOMENT WE FIRST MET, IN THE HIMALAYAN SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF OUR MENTOR, THE ANCIENT ONE.
BUT, IN TRUTH, I WOULD NOT HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY. THOUGH I HAVE TRIED TO SLAY YOU THROUGH SURROGATES, I HOPED IT WOULD END LIKE THIS.
YOU AND I, BATTLING TOE-TO-TOE WITH ALL OUR SORCEROUS MIGHT--
--TO THE DEATH!!
16 From Dr. Strange #41 Dan Green inks
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Correspondence Course

When did you decide to start the correspondence course?
Well I thought it would be a pretty good idea — I did teach at the School of Visual Arts for about seven or eight years. Commuting between here [Vermont] and New York is impossible. So I gave that up for a while, and then I started to think that maybe there was another way I could do some teaching. There are a lot of people out there that would like to get into the business, and I figured maybe I could help them in some way to hone their skills. This is for those that have some ability, for those who really don't but who are interested in it, and also for those that are pretty darn good at what they do but who would like to learn a little more. I have about fifty–two years in the business and I think that I've gathered up enough information on how to go about it. What they would do is show me what they can do in various areas, send it to me, and then I would put an overlay on it and make corrections and suggestions in the margins on what's wrong and how they can correct it.

Many years ago a lot of the top illustrators in the country including Norman Rockwell started a correspondence school in Connecticut and they did very well with it. They were able to help people get into the business of illustration. So I thought it would be a great idea to help people get into the business of comic books.

Would there be different courses?
Yes. I have courses on anatomy, perspective, storytelling, and characterization. Doing comics is like doing a film — you're dealing with sequential art, really. I try to cover everything that a person would need to know to work in the comic book industry. I don't teach a course on inking, because most of my time in this business has been in pencilling.

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How long would it take a person to complete a course?
I'd say about six weeks. It takes a lot of time and devotion on their part.

If someone wants to find out more information about your correspondence course, how would they go about doing so?
My wife set all this up, and there's a website (www.geocities.com/~genecolan/main.htm), and they can also contact me through e-mail (gene@genecolan.com), or they can write to me at P.O. Box 2267, Manchester Center, VT, 05255.

Is there anything else you'd like to say about the correspondence course?
I think that comic books go hand in hand with filmmaking, and for anyone out there that's interested in filmmaking, these courses would be a good start on learning how to put together a film, because it's all sequential art. So even if you're not necessarily interested in comic books, the courses would be of a help to you if you're interested in films. If you want to get into filmmaking, it's good to have some of that knowledge behind you, rather than to go in as green as grass and knowing nothing about filmmaking.

CORRIGAN--PETERS--! KEEP THOSE PEOPLE *BACK*, BLAST IT!

WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A BLASTED *MANIAC*, IN THERE!

TAKE MY *WORD* FOR IT, SERGEANT--

CRIPES, LIEUTENANT --WHAT'F IT'S THE *HULK*? WHAT'LL WE DO *THEN*?

--*THAT'S NOT THE HULK!*

WHO THE--?

CALL ME *DAREDEVIL*, OFFICER, YOUR FRIENDLY *MAN WITHOUT FEAR!*

I'VE BEEN TRACKING OUR FRIEND ACROSS THE *CITY*--

--AND HIS NAME'S-- *THE OX!*

YEH? WELL, BUSTER--MAYBE YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE 'IM ON ALL BY YOUR *LONESOME*, RIGHT?

FORGET IT, HERO-MAN.

--HE'S GOT HIMSELF *CORNERED*, KNOW WHAT *I MEAN*?

WHOEVER THAT IS HOLED UP IN THE *ARMORY*--

WE DON'T NEED NO BLASTED COSTUMED *NUT* MAKING OUR JOB HERE DIFFICULT-- *UNDERSTAND*?

PERFECTLY, OFFICER...

...BUT SUPPOSE I JUST TAKE IT UP WITH THE *JUDGE*?

HEY, WAITA-MINUTE--!

AH, CUT IT *OUT*, LIEUTENANT. IF HE WANTS TO BREAK HIS NECK, *LET* HIM.

ONE LESS GOON TO *WORRY* ABOUT, *I* SAY.

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From Daredevil #86 Inks by Tom Palmer. Daredevil ©& *TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

Do you remember the first time you became aware of Gene's work?

When I was five or six years old, I remember reading *Daredevil* and *Dr. Strange.* I'd never seen anything like Gene's work; it was the most incredibly dramatic and moody stuff and it was captivating. It's the kind of thing that engraves itself in your memory. I was such a fan of his, even as a really young boy. When I was eight or nine years old you could have shown me any comic book and I would have said, well that's John Buscema, that's Bernie Wrightson, that's Gene Colan. I could have picked out a few people's work, but Gene's was so distinctive, his signature style never got away from you.

When I got older and I was working as a professional, he was one of the people that I always wanted to work with. I remember actually being nervous the first time I called him and asked him to do an illustration for a story that I had written. It was a child abuse story and there was nobody more suited for it than Gene. He brings a certain life and a certain mood to that kind of piece. It was a singular piece, a spot illustration. He was such a gentleman. Here I am talking to one of the icons or legends of the industry and I was a virtual unknown, a kid, and he was just so kind to me. The way he dealt with me, his whole attitude toward the entire thing was just very gentle and very warm and very encouraging. As the years went on, he illustrated a couple of stories for me. It was just such a tremendous honor for me to be working with a guy like Gene Colan. It was great working with him, it was a lot of fun.

D-DO NOT WORRY, MASTER. I WILL MAKE SURE NO ONE SEES THE RECORDS.
HOLD! SOMEONE'S LISTENING... OUTSIDE.
NO MORE, 'SMILES.' I'M IN.
AND UNLESS I'M MISTAKEN, YOU'RE--

Tomb of Dracula # 25 Tom Palmer inks. *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

On a completely different side of things he and his wife both became very good friends to me. They were very encouraging to me at a time when I was just really trying to break in as a writer. He was so much in my corner at all times that it was a tremendous encouragement for me. One of the things that Gene said to me and I never forgot it, was, "If you love it enough to do this for free you're going to make it."

When Gene was having vision problems several years ago, you organized an auction to help with the medical bills.

The auction was held to raise money for Gene so he could have an operation to save his eye. It was a painful, frightening, and terribly expensive time for them. I initially organized just Gene's friends but soon the whole industry sort of stood up and got involved. I don't think there was a professional in the industry who didn't come forward and say, "I want to help." People contributed pieces and we built an auction, and we raised enough money to help. But more importantly what it also did was let Gene come into contact with people he hadn't talked to in years. He was getting calls from well wishers, old friends, co-workers, everybody, and I think that helped in the healing process a lot, and made him feel loved. Gene deserved that kind of attention.

MOST OF OUR FOOD IS SYNTHETICALLY PROCESSED, OF COURSE, SO THE FARM-PODS AREN'T REALLY NECESSARY--

--BUT MANY OF US STILL OCCASIONALLY ENJOY THE "*REAL THING.*" NATURE MAY BE INFERIOR IN NUTRITION, BUT OUR CHEMLABS CAN NEVER EQUAL THE *TASTE* OF NATURALLY GROWN FOODSTUFFS.

AND NOW WE'LL PASS INTO ONE OF THE TWELVE THOUSAND--

--METRO-PODS. THIS IS WHERE ALL BUSINESS AND COMMERCE IS CONDUCTED-- AND WHERE 70 PERCENT OF OUR POPULATION RESIDES.

IMPRESSIVE.

OH? ACTUALLY, THIS IS ONE OF THE *SMALLER* CITIES. THE NEXT PORTAL WILL TAKE US INTO A--

--PASTORAL-POD, WHERE MOST OF THE ARTISANS CHOOSE TO DWELL-- MUSICIANS, WRITERS, ARTISTS, AND SO ON. THE REST OF US LIKE TO COME HERE FOR VACATIONS.

BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL.

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Marvel Comics Super Special #10 Tom Palmer inks. ©& *TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

PLEASE DEAR GOD-- DON'T LET THEM MISS. PLEASE.
LIKE A SWARM OF MARAUDING BEES CHASING A HIVE WRECKING GRIZZLY, THE POTENT PROJECTILES CLOSE ON THEIR HURTLING PREY--WHICH GLOWS WHITE-HOT AS IT ENTERS EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE.
QUICKENED HEARTBEATS LATER, IMPACT OCCURS WITH AN EARSPLITTING CODA SO UNLIKE THE DELICATE MUSIC SAID TO HAVE BEEN PLAYED BY THE METEOR'S MYTHOLOGICAL NAMESAKE.
MULTI-COLORED FIREWORKS BLAZE AGAINST THE BLACKNESS AS ORPHEUS BURSTS INTO A SHOWER OF RADIOACTIVE STARDUST.

From Marvel Comics Super Special #14. Tom Palmer inks. *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

You consider Gene Colan to be one of your artistic influences?
Yes I do, although I don't think that you can detect it in my work. I think that every time I look at something of Gene's I learn something. I especially felt that way when I was a kid. His work was so different from anyone else's. Stylistically, I don't think it's a small jump from Gene to me, but the similarities that we do share are that we both have an affinity for using a lot of black in our work, and a lot of light and shadow. I credit him for that sensitivity in me.

I don't think anybody out of the blue would notice the similarities between us. I did this series for Dark Horse called *Timecop* and it made my career when somebody sent in a letter saying it reminded them of Gene Colan. That just blew me away, because I didn't think anybody would pick up on that — I didn't think it would be that obvious. To be even remotely compared to him for a tenth of a second is a big deal to me.

You said you were a fan of his when you were younger.
Well, I still am. Always.

FORGET IT O'ANGELO LOVED ME LIKE A SON
YOU HAVE TO STAND UP TO YOUR PROBLEMS NICK
I HAD TWO FATHERS
WHEN I WAS A PUNK KID, THE ONLY VOICE I COULD HEAR WAS O'ANGELO'S
STAND UP TO YOUR PROBLEMS NICK!
MY DAD'S VOICE NEVER GOT MUCH IN MY HEAD
YA LISTENING NICK?
NO SHORT CUTS NICK HONESTY, INTEGRITY RESPONSIBILITY, HARD WORK!
HARD WORK IS FOR CHUMPS!
NICK LISTEN TO ME NICK NICK
IT TOOK DAD'S DEATH FOR ME TO HEAR HIS VOICE
LISTEN TO ME
14
From Argus #1 Phil Hester pencils, Wayne Faucher inks. *©& TM 1999 DC Comics. All rights reserved.*

Do you remember what you liked?
The thing that really sticks out in my mind is, his is *Tomb of Dracula*, but I'm talking about the black and white magazine. I think it was really neat to see his work rendered in wash because his pencil work is so sensitive, and sometimes very subtle. It's when it's done in wash for *Blazing Combat* or *Tomb of Dracula* that it really picks up the subtleties. I thought that stuff was just gorgeous. Then I went back and got the actual *Tomb of Dracula* series. Those two things really stick out in my mind. And then in later years I think his very best work was *Ragamuffins* with Don McGregor. There's never been anything in comics like that.

What do you think is Gene's strongest point as an artist?
I have a hard time narrowing it down to one thing. I think how sensitive he is to light and shadow and almost every pencil stroke has a life of its own. The blacks just flow across the page and through a panel in a totally natural way — it's not contrived at all, but it really stands out. I think Gene, like other really great cartoonists like Alex Toth, Wally Wood, or Steve Rude, really pares things down to their essential elements. When Toth does it, it gets real cartoony, and I love that. When Gene does it, he pares it down but still there's this element of realism to it. Everything is still so accurate, even though he's stripped away unessential details. Gene's drawings seem almost more accurate than real life, and I think that's beautiful. I really admire him a lot.

THE YEAR IS 1943, THE PLACE IS GERMANY DURING WORLD WAR II... BUT WE ARE NOT HERE TO WITNESS BATTLES OR COMBAT, OR THAT WHICH IS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH WAR... WE ARE ABOUT TO OBSERVE THE STRANGE RESULTS OF AN...

EXPERIMENT IN FEAR!

THE GAUNT TORTURED FACES, THE HOLLOW STARING EYES BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE DREW LITTLE NOTICE FROM THE TWO OFFICERS AS THEY TALKED. NOR DID THE THICK BLANKET OF SMOKE WITH ITS TERRIBLE UNNATURAL SMELL WHICH HOVERED PERPETUALLY OVER THIS PLACE CALLED A CAMP BUT IN REALITY A FACTORY... A FACTORY OF DEATH!

NOW YOU'VE SEEN IT, COLONEL KOLB, THE ENTIRE OPERATION! ALL AWAITING FOR YOU TO TAKE COMMAND...

IMPRESSIVE, DR. STRASSER. IT'LL BE A CHALLENGE TO KEEP UP THE PRODUCTION SCHEDULE... BUT WHAT OF THIS SPECIAL PROJECT OF YOURS? THEY SEEMED QUITE IMPRESSED IN BERLIN... GOEBBELS HIMSELF WAS ENTHUSIASTIC!

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ART BY EUGENE COLAN/SCRIPT BY ARCHIE GOODWIN

From "Experiment In Fear," Eerie #8 *©& TM 1999 Warren Publishing Co. All rights reserved.*

kelley JONES

You've said that Gene is an artistic influence.
Yes, because he straddled the superhero and the supernatural so well. He was so definitive . . . his interpretation of Daredevil is still to me the way Daredevil is. It's not because I grew up with it, it was just right on the money. Comics now are so much more limited than they were in terms of subject matter and what you could see. He used to do work for Warren, *Eerie* and *Creepy*, and he did these stunning black and white washes in his stories. I just remember he was one of the standout guys there because the monsters, the people, everything looked so good in black and white, but he added this extra dimension with the wash tones. When I would see his work in *Dracula* or elsewhere he was still able to get across that middle tone which grays are, in this beautiful line work of his. If I was to say one thing about Gene Colan's work, it's atmosphere and rhythm, because the lines are so musical. They flow into one another, and you can hear the snap of Dracula's cape. You can hear Daredevil whizzing by you — it's terrific. Not too many artists are capable of that.

What do you think Gene does that enables him to achieve that effect?
I think that he doesn't let his knowledge of drawing get in the way of drawing comics. It's clear that he's a draftsman, but he chucks that to make the stuff work when he needs to. A lot of artists don't know how to do it. He will blend figures into one another, backgrounds into the figure, the lighting will just be completely crazy, and when it's all said and done, as abstract as you may take each of those separate elements, when it all comes together it's like a remembered dream.

He is a guy who can handle the graphic side of this and it just doesn't end with it being black and white. For example, he got that underwater *thing* down when he would do the Sub-Mariner. Most artists just draw it and add a few bubbles, but Gene made you feel like you were underwater. He put thought into it. So by putting that much thought into what he was doing, he came up with these wonderful little ideas, and these terrific little things in the background. When Namor was underwater there was this feeling that it was a completely different environment. When he was on land that was when you could clearly see it. I don't know how many people gave him credit for these things, but I did.

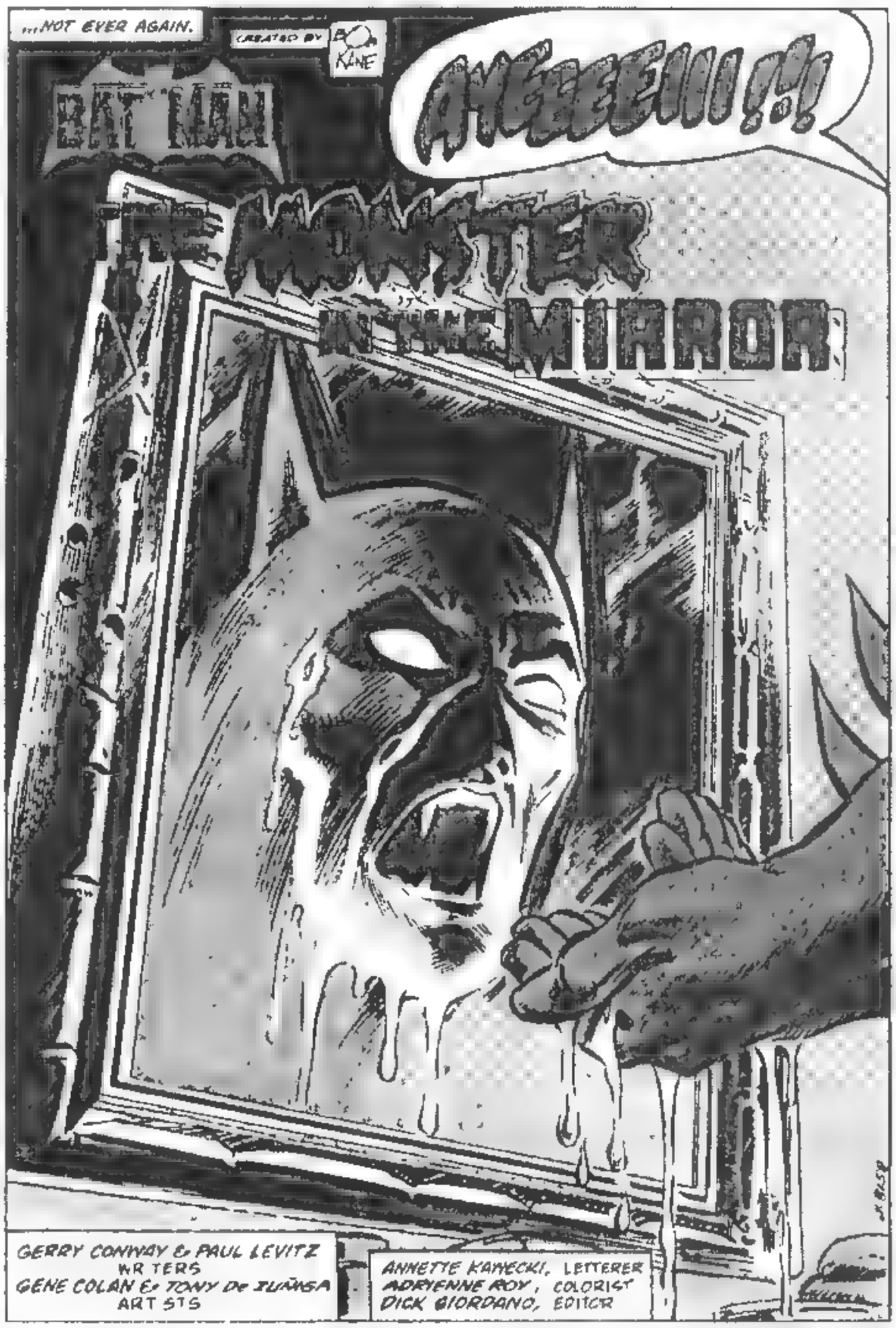
> "Gene is one of the foremost horror comic artists there ever was."

Gene is one of the foremost horror comic artists there ever was. It's strange; when people think of superheroes Colan doesn't come to mind, and when people think of horror he doesn't come to mind, because he was so good at both. The superhero guys would think he was horror, and the horror guys thought he was superhero. I thought it was a total badge of honor because that meant he was *that* good.

I think this is the lowest amount of actual talent working in comics right now. That's not a happy thing for me to say. I think that because so many creators don't have the knowledge of what came before . . . Gene Colan was as different to a Jim Starlin or to a John Buscema as one could be. Yet their work

was completely acceptable, and not that one was better than the other, they were just different. That is not the case we have now. There are many steps in making a comic before it gets into a reader's hand. But with Gene it's almost like he just handed you the page off the board; there's that energy. A lot of artist's work now is overworked and dull. You've seen one and you've seem them all. Gene's work wasn't like that. He could handle very different subject matter, very different approaches, and it certainly had his look but he understood that Daredevil was different from Dracula. It takes a lot of thinking and talent and skill to do that. His storytelling, even when two guys are just talking, was electric. That was as delightful as when he had an action scene. Somehow with Gene Colan it make you go beyond comics and seek out his work and see what he would do, and that's the mark of a great artist. Whenever I lose my interest in comics, I can go back and read ten or twelve issues of *Daredevil* and it blows me away. It reenergizes me. When I look at his work, I don't really see the nuts and bolts of how he puts it together because I'm enjoying it, and that doesn't happen too much when you've done this a long time.

Do you remember when you first became aware of Gene's work?
Yes. The first thing I remember was his work on the *Sub-Mariner*. The reason was because I was not a *Sub-Mariner* fan but I liked the issues he was drawing. I remember reading those and without realizing it I had read ten issues in a row of it. I just sat down and read one after the other and really got into it. I was a kid then and I went back and saw that it was drawn by Gene Colan. I remember thinking I never really liked this character. It seemed stupid to me that he was under the water but it was just the same as anywhere else. But when Gene did it, everything had a marine look to it. The only time I ever saw underwater flora and fauna was when he would draw it. So it was a totally different world and you started to get into it. Another talent of his is his incredible pacing. He could do these really straight panel to panel things and then he could tilt a panel on its side and have the character doing something really cool. It was really nifty stuff. I started to realize, hey, that's the guy that does Daredevil. And when you actually start drawing this and doing this or even wanting to be an artist *that's* when it hits you how good he is. His work has such an energy to it. I wrestle with it to this day. Some of it is certainly learned; Gene was born with it. I just can't see him sweating this stuff out. If he does, I'd be shocked because it looks so effortless. Also the sheer volume of his work is amazing.



Batman as a vampire (from Detective # 517) Colan pencils, Tony DeZuniga inks ©& TM 1999 DC Comics. All rights reserved.

What did you think of his run on Tomb of Dracula?
You know in recent years, I've lost a lot of respect for guys who draw really beautifully but who take a year and a half to get a book out. The other side of that is that it has increased my love for guys who do the monthly work or produce a great number of pages, and it still looks better than the guys who take years and years. That comes from me doing three years on *Batman* which is just scratching the surface as far as production goes compared to Gene. I look at his stuff and I know how I felt after just doing three years of basically sixteen comics a year, and I don't know how he's done it for all these years. It's stunning; it blows me away.

I look at his work on *Dracula* and it's just amazing. It's consistent and fluid and eccentric and weird all at the same time. It's consistently weird and dark and moody, all those things, yet it's good solid comic books from start to finish.

Gene never romanticized Dracula. He was always a horrific character, but he did bring a nobility to the drawing that made you buy it and that made you come back to a villain. I don't know how many guys can do a book about a villain and make you come back. There was something that he could bring out of those scripts of *Dracula* that just couldn't have been in the story. You either have an artist that can do it or they can't. Gene had a flair for it. Drama I guess is the word I would use. There was a lot of drama to his work, a lot of theatrical drama. He was a consummate artist as well as storyteller, and still is. But he could chuck all that stuff when he needed to make you look. To me, a great comic artist has to have is the ability to make his own distinctive rules. There aren't many guys who can do that. Most artists now just do close-ups and flexing muscles; Gene could do everything.

Batman as a vampire (from Bloodstorm) Kelley Jones pencils, John Beatty inks *©& TM 1999 DC Comics. All rights reserved.*

Every page always seemed like it was something new.
Because he was an artist in the truest sense who happened to draw comic books. He's a guy that should be remembered for what he's contributed to the state of comic book art. He should be put into the first rank of all the comic book artists. In comics you have to not just prove that you can draw well, you have to have longevity through your professionalism. You have to professionally be on time, have a lot of stuff under your belt and be good over a period of years. And for Colan it's just effortless. He still doing it. I look at what he does, and I'm still as impressed as I ever was. ❖

AND ALONE, AS HE HAS FACED FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF LIFE, DRACULA MOVES ON.

...EVER ONWARD... AND EVER ALONE.

I COULD *WANDER* HOPELESSLY IN THESE MOUNTAINS FOR *YEARS*-- NAY, *CENTURIES*--IF I HAD *BLOOD* ENOUGH.

BUT THERE IS *NONE*.

YET, TO *SURRENDER* IS NOT THE WAY OF A DRACULA. *NO*--! DRACULA FIGHTS ON-- AND IF HE MUST *PERISH*, IT SHALL BE A DEATH OF *VALOR*, AND NOT OF *COWARDICE*.

WAIT--! THESE *BRANCHES* WERE RECENTLY USED FOR *FIRE*. PERHAPS--

--YES! I SENSE HUMAN *FLESH*-- STILL WARM... AND YET...

BUT I SHALL *SEE* IF WHAT I SENSE IS *TRUE*-- OR MERELY THE BLOOD-CRAZED *DELUSIONS* OF THE LORD OF VAMPIRES.

WITHIN THAT ALMOST *HIDDEN* CAVE I SHOULD FIND THE *SOLUTION* TO MY PROBLEMS...

...OR THE FINAL *NAIL* TO SEAL MY COFFIN FOREVER.

Tomb of Dracula # *20 Tom Palmer inks.* *©& TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

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WHO ARE THEY?

Dan Brereton Dan has produced outstanding work for many companies including *Lady Justice* for Tekno, *Night Breed* for Marvel, and *Legends of the Worlds Finest* for DC. He also had *Nocturnals* published by Bravura.

Peter David Currently the writer of *Supergirl* and *Young Justice* for DC Comics. Peter also has a regular column in the *Comics Buyer's Guide.*

Mark Evanier Has written for comics, movies, and television. His current mini-series is *Fanboy* for DC comics. Mark also has a regular column in the *Comics Buyer's Guide*

Steve Gerber Steve has created many characters including Howard the Duck. Last year his mini-series *Nevada* was published by DC.

Fred Hembeck Cartoonist whose work has appeared in the *Comics Buyer's Guide, Marvel Age* and *the Comic Reader.*

Phil Hester Phil's pencils have graced many series including *Timecop, Argus, Swamp Thing* and his new series from Amaze Ink/Slave Labor called the *Wretch.*

Kelley Jones The third part in the Batman/vampire trilogy, *Crimson Mist,* which Kelley pencilled was just recently released from DC. He is also the creator of *Hammer,* which is published by Dark Horse.

Stan Lee In addition to being a living legend, Stan recently launched a new comic related web site. An entire years worth of this magazine could still not adequately convey his contributions to the comic book industry.

Don McGregor In addition to his many projects with Gene, Don has also written *Sabre* and *Lady Rawhide* and many other projects.

Clifford Meth He has had numerous works of short fiction published and he has published several anthologies that featured work from such writers as Harlan Ellison.

Tom Palmer Considered by many to be one of the finest inkers in the industry. In addition to his long run on *Tomb of Dracula* with Gene, Tom was the regular inker on the *Avengers* for nearly ten years.

Mike Pascale Creator of *Bru-Hed* and *Nasti: Monster Hunter*. Both are published by Schism Comics.

Marv Wolfman Marv has an outstanding list of credits to his name including the ground breaking mini-series *Crisis on Infinite Earths.*

MIKE'S MEANDERINGS

by Mike Pascale

It's 1969. You're Gene Colan. You've been the regular penciller on Marvel's *Daredevil* (a "mid-level" book), for three years. Then you get another assignment:

Replace Jack Kirby as regular penciller on *Captain America*.

"Huh?"
"Oh, don't worry — it's not like you'll be the first guy after Jack . . . there's been a bunch of fill–ins by different artists in the meantime."
"Like who?"
"Nobody, really. John Romita, John Buscema, and some guy named Steranko."
"Say *what?!*"

That's what Gene was faced with back then. And you know what? He did one marvelous job (pun intended). Few have done as well.

The first Colan issue I ever saw was #116 (his first of a twenty-one issue run); I bought in a back-issue bin when I was 11 or 12 years old. The story, part of the "Cosmic Cube Saga," had the Red Skull using the powerful Cube to switch bodies with Cap.

Think about that for a second: it's your first issue of "America's Living Legend," one of Marvel's top characters since the 1940's. You have to make him look *evil* because he's really his hated archenemy, and you have to make the Red Skull, a ruthless Nazi in a hideous horror mask, look both heroic *and* sympathetic because he's really Cap!! (If I were Gene, I'd think Stan Lee was trying to drive me nuts!)

But Gene pulled it off beautifully, because, even at age 11, I had no problem figuring out the story. And I can see it now that I look at it again as a "professional." Cap actually looked menacing and the Skull downright tragic. When they did switch back in a later issue, each looked perfectly "in character" once again. (Kudos also go to inking legend "Joltin'" Joe Sinnott for doing good by Colan's pencils.)

The next one I remember as a lad is the splash page of #125, "Captured in Viet Nam." It shows a highly-anxious Steve Rogers throwing his Cap costume around the room, totally wigged out after breaking up with his girlfriend. "I need some *action —fast*!," he cries, "*Anything* to make me forget about *Sharon!*" (Note: "action" in this case meant doing superhero-type stuff; after all, this is Captain America! *Shame* on you!) I hadn't seen this dynamic drawing in decades and it's still as striking as ever.

Looking over these books, I now feel sorry for Gene's inkers through the years. Colan's pencils are recognizable from a mile away: the fluidity of motion, the lifelike quality, the dramatic lighting, the ever–so–subtle nuances of facial expressions that make the figures actually look like living, breathing people. His art is forever moving, always flowing from one panel to the next with flawless grace and masterful gesticulation. How someone can put opaque ink over it and still maintain all that subtly is beyond me.

Which explains why sometimes Colan's stuff tended to look anatomically awkward, invariably due to some unlucky soul not knowing how to correctly cover Gene's pencils and still let them shine through. He had to realize he was inking a *gesture*, an impression of a figure in motion, not a static photographic representation. Only a handful have ever "got it" when inking Gene Colan (a couple of my favorites being Tom Palmer [on *Tomb of Dracula*] and Joe Sinnott).

Which is why I was gleefully incoherent when I saw one of his later *Nathaniel Dusk* projects, which was printed directly from Colan's pencils — no black lines. Breathtaking. It was an absolute aesthetic pleasure to see this giant's "virgin" pencil art. (But I still want more!!)

How wonderful — and amazing — that after so many decades of inspiring work, the man is still outdoing himself whenever possible. (Cue applause.)

I eventually had the pleasure of meeting Gene (along with his lovely and charming wife, Adrienne) at a convention. I was finally able to thank him in person for giving me so much joy during my impressionable childhood, helping to make that the magical time it was. (As well as helping to cement Captain America as my all–time favorite superhero.)

And it gives me even greater pleasure to acknowledge him in print, permanently and indelibly, for having the skill and soul to drop my jaw, warm my heart, and shake my head in awe and admiration for the last 24 years. Thanks again, Gene. (Cue standing ovation.)

LETTERS

Hello-

I just finished the John Byrne issue and thought I'd drop you a line. *Comic Book Profiles* is my favorite magazine on the market. I can't really think of any complaints that I could make. What singles your magazine out for me is the choices you make for your featured creators. The Bernie Wrightson issue stuck out at me on the shelf and I knew someone was finally putting out a publication for people who truly love the art form of comics.

I'm 28 years old and have been reading comics since before the time I could actually read. I grew up reading the works of your featured creators and didn't really understand the significance of the quality of their work until about 6 or 7 years ago. I loved their books but now I respect their knowledge of the form. Neal Adams, John Byrne, Romita, Wrightson . . . masters all. Old school guys whose work stands up more than 99% of the stuff that *Wizard* features. The best thing is the fact that the people profiled here teach a reader so much on what it means to tell a story with words and pictures. I eat up everything they have to say and I can't thank you enough for printing their knowledge. Future candidates I would like to see include Arthur Adams, Mike Mignola, Michael Golden, Frank Miller and Will Eisner. I'm just starting to get into Eisner and would love to see a profile there. I do have to say that Mignola is my favorite artist in the biz so pretend I voted for him twice. All in all just keep doing what you do and I will definitely keep reading with much excitement.

Thank you much,

Christopher Smits

Christopher thank you for your comments and for your suggestions for future issues. We have been getting a lot of requests for the artists you mention and we are hard at work on trying to get one particular person on your list, but it is too soon to say anything more about it at this time.

Hi,

Well I just got done reading the latest issue about John Byrne and once again you guys have impressed me. The interview is very complete and never strays from the topic at hand (John Byrne). I can't say that I have followed him very closely but I do have a chunk of his stuff and have never been displeased with his artwork or story line.

Once again you guys have outdone yourselves and deserve a pat on the back.

Jon Falk
Webmaster of Uticon Web Page
http://members.ccny.com/~falkman/uticon/index.html

As you can see, Jon is the webmaster for the Uticon Web Page. Uticon is a convention that benefits the American Cancer Society, and is held each fall in Utica NY. If you will be in the area, check Jon's web page for more info on the fall 1999 show.

Dear Profiles;

I enjoyed issue 5 but I expect issue 6 to be your best issue. Not only are you featuring my favorite artist, Gene Colon, but you are increasing the size of the magazine.

I read that you are going to do a tribute to Archie Goodwin. This is an excellent idea. Does this mean that you may do issues on writers? If so, I would like to recommend Roy Thomas as a possible subject for a future issue.

Dennis Barger

Dennis, I hope this issue lived up to your expectations. It has always been our intent to showcase writers and other

comic book creators as well as artists. In fact when we started the magazine, we sat down and made a list of six creators that we wanted to profile; four artists and two writers. It has just been circumstance the way things have worked out that we have so far included only artists. There are many writers that I would like to feature; Roy Thomas being one of them.

Hi Matt
I enjoyed my copy of issue #5 thoroughly. It's the first time I've sat down and read a magazine cover to cover in quite some time. I've read damn near every interview John's ever done and I honesty thought that this was the most comprehensive and enjoyable. You covered all the bases and did so without forcing any angles or bias' on anyone. I'm flattered and honored to have been given the chance to share my viewpoints on John, the guy who started it all for me. Thanks again Matt!

Tim Townsend

Hello,
Thank you for putting out such a great magazine. In times like these, it is important to return to the ideals the artists you profile represent. Today the young readers don't know about the "old guard" and even if I don't think that many young readers would pick your magazine, it's important that it exists (for collectors or for older readers). The cool thing about your magazine is the infinite pool of artists that you can choose from; M. Golden (even if he doesn't like to be interviewed), M. Ploog, Simonson, B.Smith, Chaykin, Reese. The list is endless. The only thing that I regret is that a comprehensive list of the artist's work is still missing. I know that it is quite a work but it would be a wonderful add to your magazine. Again thank you and continue the great work.
Frederic Massa
Belgium

Frederic, we did seriously consider having a checklist with this issue, but were not able to work out the logistics. However, we have started to make plans to have lists in future issues.

I know most of you probably bought this copy of the magazine in a comic book store but if you didn't or if you need to locate a comic book store in another city from where you live, don't forget to use the Comic Book Locator service.

That's it for this issue. Write and let us know what you think of the new expanded format and who you would like to see in future issues. One other thing we would like to hear from you about; how important is a color cover to you? Would you prefer a color cover, again with a modest price increase, or ae you happy the way things are now?

Well, I've run out of room. Take care, and I hope to meet you back here in 90!

Remember our address is:
As You Like It Publications, P.O. Box 2055, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 and the e-mail address is CBPROFILES@aol.com.

WHAT'S ON DECK?

MICHAEL WILLIAM KALUTA

Issue # 7 of Comic Book Profiles provides an in-depth look at artist Michael Kaluta. In an extensive interview, Kaluta talks about his career, about his collaborations on comic books with such creators as Al Williamson, Bernie Wrightson and Denny O'Neil. He also discusses his non-comic book related projects including book illustrations and design work for movies, TV, and the Off-Broadway play Starstruck. Kaluta also shares his insights on his creative process. This issue contains many supporting interviews from friends and associates that have worked with Michael Kaluta throughout his career and numerous examples of Kaluta artwork. And as always, Mike Pascale will continue his Meanderings and Fred Hembeck will be on hand to give us his Final Thoughts. All this in our newly expanded format as we continue to bring you more art and interviews than ever before.

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HEMBECK'S FINAL THOUGHTS

GENIAL *GENE COLAN*. HIS LONG AND SPLENDID CAREER HAS INCLUDED FINE WORK FOR PUBLISHERS RANGING FROM *DC*, *WARREN*, AND *DELL* TO *EC* AND *ARCHIE*, BUT HE'LL ALWAYS BE *MOST* ASSOCIATED WITH THE BOOKS HE DREW FOR THE ENERGETIC *MARVEL LINE* DURING ITS CRUCIAL *FORMATIVE* STAGES OF THE LATE SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES.

MOST NOTABLY, *MINE*--*DAREDEVIL*. HIS LONG, *LONG* RUN--WHICH HE SUCCESSFULLY *REFRIGED* JUST A FEW YEARS BACK--MADE FANS *FORGET* THE STELLAR WORK OF BILL EVERETT, JOE ORLANDO, WALLY WOOD, BOB POWELL, *AND* JOHNNY ROMITA, WHO, LEGENDS *ALL* PRECEEDED HIM. OF THOSE WHO *FOLLOWED*, ONLY FRANK MILLER HAS--

COUNT DRACULA?
WHILE *YOUR* SERIES WAS PLAGUED BY A REVOLVING CREW OF WRITERS AND INKERS; IT'S THE SHEER *COMBINATION* OF MARV WOLFMAN'S *MASTERFUL* SCRIPTS AND TOM PALMER'S *UNMATCHED* EMBELLISHING OF COLAN ON *MY* LONG-RUNNING "*TOMB OF DRACULA*" TITLE THAT READERS WILL *ULTIMATELY* RECALL HIM FOR!
YOUR THEORY HAS *SOME* BITE--

IRON MAN?
--BUT AS HIS *FIRST* REGULAR ASSIGNMENT FOR THE REVITALIZED MARVEL, LET'S NOT FORGET THAT, WHETHER WORKING UNDER THE NAME OF "ADAM AUSTIN" OR NOT, HE MADE THIS METAL SUIT COME *ALIVE* AS IT *NEVER* HAD BEFORE!
BAH THAT IS NEXT TO *NOTHING!*

SUB-MARINER?
GIVEN *MY* INITIAL SERIES IN THE LATTER-DAY MARVEL UNIVERSE TO ILLUSTRATE, "AUSTIN" COLAN, OR *WHOEVER*--HE WAS THE *FIRST* ARTIST TO HAVE THE *GOOD SENSE* TO REALIZE MY HEAD *WASN'T* TRIANGULAR-SHAPED!
THE *SENSE*, YES, *AND* THE ABILITY--

DR. STRANGE?
--TO *ALSO* REALIZE HE *WASN'T* STEVE DITKO, THUS BRINGING A *RARE* FRESH INTERPRETATION TO MY MYSTICAL MEANDERINGS *DESPITE* EDITORIAL BRIEFLY SADDLING HIM WITH *THIS* UNLIKELY UNIFORM!
THE *SAME* EDITORIAL FOLKS WHO TEAMED *ME* WITH *THIS* UNLIKELY PARTNER--

CAPTAIN AMERICA? AND--
--*THE FALCON*, WHO *FIRST* APPEARED DURING AN OFT-OVERLOOKED BUT DECIDEDLY SOLID STINT MR. COLAN PUT IN ON MY BOOK.
Ah, BUT HE WASN'T THE *ONLY* MARVEL SUPER-STAR GENE ORIGINATED--

CAPTAIN MARVEL?!
--AS *I* WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE HIM DELINIATE MY DEBUT. TRUE, BY THE TIME I SLIPPED INTO MY MORE *POPULAR* RED AND BLUE TOGS, HE WAS *LONG GONE*, AND WHILE MY NAME *MAY'VE* BEEN ..uh.. *BORROWED*, HOW MUCH *MORE* ORIGINAL CAN YA GET?
MAYBE *I* CAN TELL YOU--

--*BROTHER VOODOO?!!*
--SINCE MR. COLAN *PROUDLY* PENCILLED *MY* FEATURE FOR ITS *ENTIRE* RUN IN "*STRANGE TALES*"!! TRUE, THAT ONLY AMOUNTED TO *FIVE* ISSUES, AND *SURE*, IT *WAS* JOHN ROMITA WHO ACTUALLY *DESIGNED* MY OUTFIT--
BA-DA BOOM BA-DA BING

..I WAS *JUST* WONDERING IF *THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY* WERE EXPECTED ALONG ANYTIME SOON?
sigh..THE *SAME* THING HAPPENED TO ME AT THE *LEN WEIN* TESTIMONIAL DINNER...

NOTE: GENE DREW THE FIRST--AND FOR MANY YEARS, ONLY--APPEARENCE OF THE GUARDIANS. LEN WROTE BRD VOODOO (THOUGH ROY THOMAS CREATED HIM).

email Fred at FHEMBECK@aol.com

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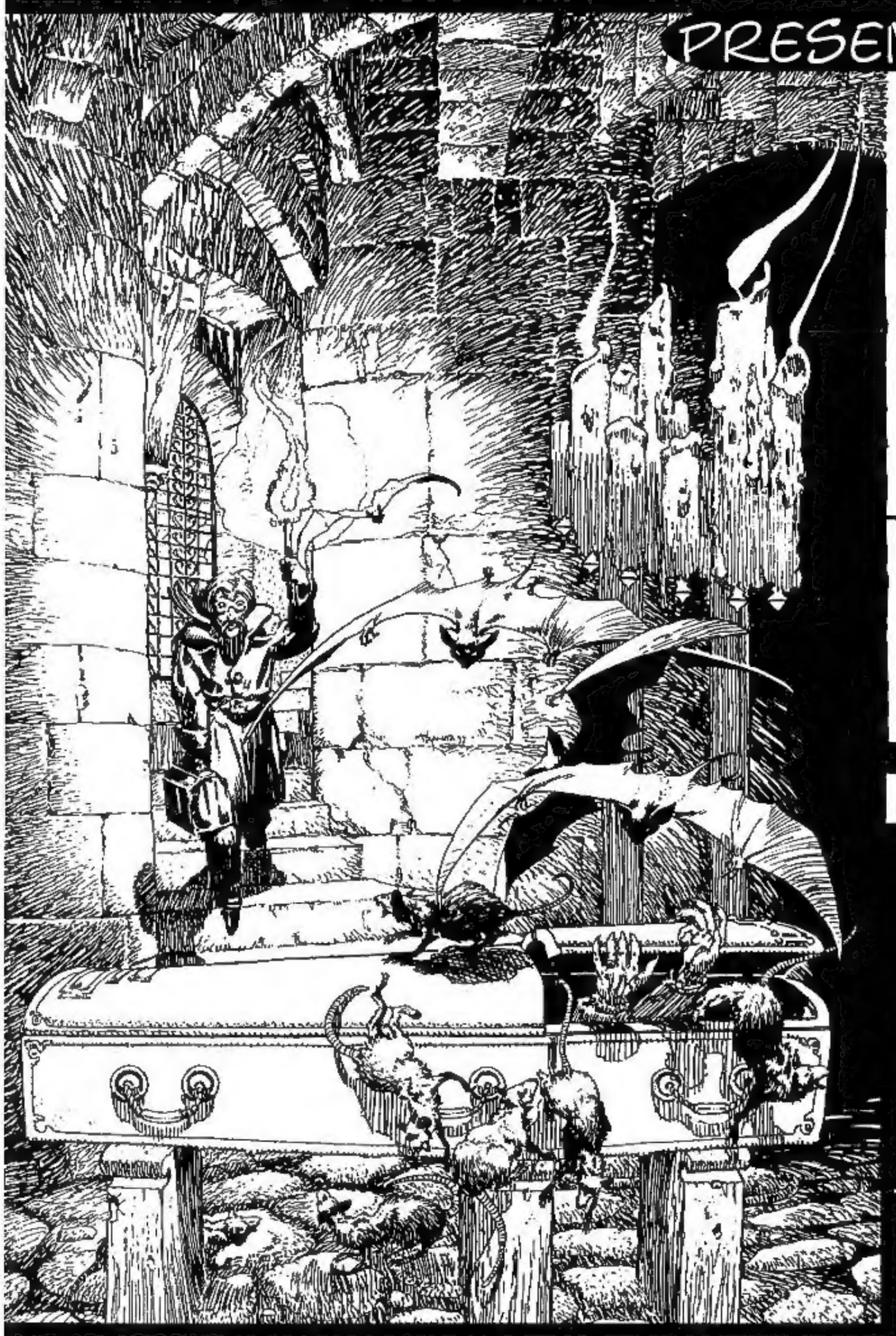

PRESENTS

MICHAEL WILLIAM KALUTA

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